

East Wichel Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136068
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	382020
Inspection dates	31 January–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Merchant

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Bolton
Headteacher	Caroline Henham
Date of previous school inspection	Not applicable
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	31 January–1 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Merchant

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Ten lessons were observed and two of these were carried out jointly by the inspector and senior staff. All six classroom teachers were observed teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school's monitoring information and a range of school policies. He also analysed questionnaires received from 33 parents and carers and 34 pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a below-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school opened in September 2010 with small numbers of children in just one Reception class. A substantive headteacher was appointed in April 2011 and the school moved into a new building on the southern edge of Swindon in September 2011. Children are taught in the Nursery, two Reception classes and three mixed-age classes. Pupils join the school from a wide number of other schools across the town and as it has not yet entered pupils for national tests at the end of Year 6, the government's current floor standards have not been measured. The school has achieved many awards including the bronze Eco School Award, Silver Sing – Up and the International Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- East Wichel Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. In the short time they have been at the school, most pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- School data and work seen by the inspector show that current attainment of pupils in Year 6 is broadly average. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are hampered from extending learning in the outside area because there are insufficient high-quality outdoor resources for the children to improve their climbing, clambering and physical skills.
- A relentless focus on teaching sounds and letters ensures that by the age of six nearly all pupils are confident readers. Progress is relatively slower in writing and in mathematics where pupils sometimes find difficulty in solving number problems stated in words and in expressing their ideas in writing when they have read a text.
- Teaching is good and has been the key factor in promoting pupils' good progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations, plan their lessons very well and expect much of their pupils. In some lessons, learning falls short of being outstanding because pupils are given insufficient time to work independently and to talk about their findings.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong, behave well and have a deep appreciation and enjoyment of the wonders of life around them. Pupils' personal development is good because the pupils are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high.
- The school's early success has undoubtedly been brought about by the diligent efforts of staff. They have been guided by the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, with strong support from her talented deputy headteacher, and all have a very clear vision of high-quality provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment so that most pupils reach above the expected levels nationally for their age in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that effective techniques to teach writing are employed consistently so all pupils write confidently and creatively
 - developing pupils' higher-level problem-solving skills in mathematics
 - giving pupils more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class.
- Develop the outside learning areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are used more effectively for developing all areas of children's learning and, in particular, to extend pupils' physical development.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected of their age. They make good progress through Nursery and Reception because the well-organised learning environment provides children with exciting learning opportunities, allowing them to make choices and develop independence. They make particularly impressive gains in their personal, social and reading skills. The outside area offers insufficient opportunity for learning and is not used well enough by adults to help develop children's climbing skills and physical development.

As the pupils go through the school, all groups make good progress in relation to their starting points, especially in reading, and achieve well. Attainment is sometimes held back because some pupils have difficulty in explaining their ideas when they have read a text which, in turn, inhibits their ability to write well at the higher levels and solve higher-level number problems expressed in words. The quality of learning in all of the lessons observed was at least good and in many it was outstanding. Pupils are keen to do their best, work purposefully in lessons and greatly enjoy what they are doing. This enjoyment stems from the good rapport they have with each other and their teachers. In an outstanding Years 3/4 numeracy lesson, all pupils were captivated by the class teacher's lively and inspirational exposition, and her clever use of questions spurred all on to make great gains in their understanding of volume and capacity.

The school works very effectively to support pupils who enter the school mid-way through the year and those with particularly low levels of attainment. Detailed plans to support these groups and timely interventions ensure that they make similar progress to that of their classmates. Skilled teaching assistants provide very effective support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This enables them to overcome many of the barriers in their lives and make progress which is equal to that of their peers. Parents are delighted with the support provided for their children and their comments are reflected in the views of one who said, '... a fantastic school. My children have settled in quickly and are bringing their learning home and telling me all about the exciting things they have done that day.'

Across the school, pupils make good gains in reading due to the emphasis placed on developing pupils' reading skills across all subjects and interventions for pupils who find learning difficult. These carefully-planned programmes of one-to-one and small group support are effective in raising pupils' attainment and self-esteem. School records show that the attainment of most at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading is above that expected of their ages. The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires agreed that their children were making good progress at the school and that their needs were very well met.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching and engagement with pupils and their learning are good and all parents and carers who were spoken to echoed this. Teachers plan very well and adapt their lessons quickly in response to their assessment of pupils' understanding and progress. Most teachers use questioning well to draw the pupils into discussion. Effective use of talking partners, drama, role play and letter and sounds activities helps pupils make good progress in their speaking and reading. In an excellent Reception class lesson pupils made rapid progress in developing their reading skills. They were enthralled by the teacher's expert and lively use of sounds to help them deduce simple three letter, then more complex, words left behind in the sand by 'Pirate Pete'. Teachers mark books and set targets for improvement thoughtfully and carefully. The school has set up very thorough systems to check on pupils' progress. These are used very well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind, and to enable teachers to consistently set the next steps for each pupil's learning. Where teaching falls short of outstanding, learning and progress are held back because teachers sometimes talk too much and over direct the tasks pupils undertake. This limits the time pupils are actively and independently learning and results in slower progress and less time for pupils to articulate what they have learnt.

The exciting and well-planned curriculum is very well thought out, so that teaching enables pupils from all backgrounds to enjoy learning, achieve well and gain many skills for their wider personal development. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Consequently, pupils have a highly developed understanding of right and wrong and a deep appreciation and enjoyment of the wonders of life around them. Thoughtful and stimulating assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on many spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good and the pupils thoroughly enjoy their time in school. This is reflected in above average attendance rates and excellent punctuality. There is a strong sense of spirituality and moral responsibility throughout the school, which is underpinned by warm and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. During the inspection, all groups of pupils also said that they felt safe in the school and nearly all pupils who responded to the questionnaire agreed. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying, but almost all pupils consider behaviour in school to be good and bullying to be very rare. Pupils trust that the staff will deal with rare incidents of any forms of bullying. The school's records show, and pupils confirm, that incidents of racism or harassment are

extremely rare and dealt with effectively.

Pupils are very considerate and cooperate well at all times. They accept that everyone has something to offer and encourage each other to do well. During one English lesson, for example, pupils in Year 5/6 worked in groups to generate discussion and ideas about why the school should only buy 'Fair Trade' products.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body share a determination to make East Wichel an exciting school that aims for the highest standards of attainment. The highly effective headteacher has directed improvement extremely well and communicates her high expectations tenaciously and persuasively so that all staff have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. The senior team uses its excellent coaching and mentoring skills to offer constructive advice and training. The team uses highly effective teachers particularly well to extend and share good practice. In this way, the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. At the time of the inspection, there was no evidence of any discrimination and the school promotes equality for all pupils vigorously through sophisticated monitoring and timely support. Progress for all groups of pupils, given their different starting points, is broadly similar, indicating that the school's commitment to equal opportunities is translated effectively into its practice.

The governing body is increasingly able to hold the school to account for its work and has been influential in setting the ethos for this new school and in helping senior managers build effective teams. It fulfils all legal requirements, and all safeguarding arrangements were found to be compliant and effective at the time of the inspection. Good practice in safeguarding and child protection is evident in all areas of the school's work. For instance, checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough.

School leaders have ensured that the curriculum is good and successfully promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. In this inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school forms excellent relationships with families, including those that may be considered to be harder to reach, and works well in partnership with external agencies and its partner schools to secure extra support for those pupils who need it.

Even though the school has many good features, staff and the governing body are not complacent and want to lift pupils' attainment even further. They know exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems of school self-evaluation. This, coupled with the strong gains in pupils' progress in their short time at the school, the good and often outstanding teaching and very high staff morale, means the school's capacity to improve further is good.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Wichel Primary School, Swindon SN1 7AG

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. What a lovely two days I had. I enjoyed meeting and talking to you and loved watching you singing in your assemblies! You go to a good school that is improving quickly. It has many good features and you are right to be proud of it. Here are some of the good things I found out about East Wichel School.

- You make good progress as you move through the school and you achieve well. By the time you reach Year 6, your attainment is similar to that of pupils in most other schools. This is because you work hard and because of the good teaching that you receive.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you. You told us they make sure that everyone feels completely safe and secure.
- You behave well around the school and in your classes and you look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.
- Your headteacher, the governing body and all the other staff know in detail how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

To help the school improve further, I have asked those who lead and manage the school to do three things.

- Make sure that more of you exceed the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics in the national tests that you will take at the end of Year 6.
- Give you more opportunities to be able to learn more things on your own.
- Provide the right outdoor equipment for the Nursery and Reception classes so that children can practise their climbing and clambering skills.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Lead inspector

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