

East Borough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118298
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358303
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Palmby
Headteacher	Janet Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
School address	Vinters Road Maidstone ME14 5DX
Telephone number	01622 754633
Fax number	01622 672017
Email address	karen.mirams@east-borough.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Inspectors looked at a wide range of evidence, which included seeing 14 teachers teach as part of the 22 lessons/part lessons observed; they also looked at examples of pupils' work. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and three members of the governing body. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, which included such things as the school's improvement planning and assessments about pupils' progress. In total, 246 parent and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The effectiveness of leaders' and teachers self-evaluation, which included how well assessment information is being used to improve teaching and learning.
- Improvements in mathematics, especially for the most able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Why pupils appear to do well in English.
- If the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.
- How well the most able pupils are challenged and supported.

Information about the school

Eastborough Primary School is larger than most schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a quarter of all pupils come from wide-ranging cultural heritages. More than 24 languages are spoken in addition to English. The headteacher started at the school this term. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils' particular needs most often link to moderate learning difficulties, speech and language or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes. When children join the school they come from 17 different educational settings. The governing body is responsible overall for the 'School's Out' provision, which is a breakfast, after-school and holiday club that has its own building. The daily management of 'School's Out' is overseen by the school's business manager.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Eastborough is a satisfactory school, which has been improving steadily since its last inspection. Based on the impact of these improvements the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to continue improving. Inspectors were impressed by the way in which the headteacher has already made a thorough evaluation of the work of the school. This has raised the bar on what the school should be expecting from the pupils, so that their achievement can lift from being satisfactory to become good in the future. Currently levels of attainment are average by the end of Year 6. Leaders recognise that sometimes work is not consistently challenging for different ability groups.

The new headteacher is empowering her very enthusiastic and dedicated staff to strengthen their leadership roles, especially by helping them to gain the skills needed to give them greater ownership about the way that the whole school performs in the subjects that they are responsible for. Staff spoke enthusiastically about the recent training sessions and about the ethos in the school as a whole. Taking all leaders and managers into account, the overall quality of self-evaluation is satisfactory. This has led to a clear development plan that focuses on the key priorities for improvement in assessment procedures, as they are currently inadequate. This is because of the inconsistency in the quality and accuracy of assessment procedures. As a result, this acts as a barrier for lifting pupils' overall achievement. While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, there is not enough good and outstanding teaching and learning to accelerate pupils' progress.

Pupils are very positive about the school; their behaviour is good and has recently improved considerably according to leaders, staff and pupils' observations. A positive contribution is made to the community, though such things as pupils singing, by learning sign language, helping at Vinters Park Nature Reserve and by working to help the Salvation Army Lunch Club. Through the highly committed work of the governing body and other leaders, there has been a strong drive to improve sporting opportunities and pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well; the appetising school meals and healthy tuck shop contribute much to this.

Other strengths include the good overall care of pupils, especially through the work of the outstanding family liaison officer. Parents have confidence in the school and the partnerships with others are good. The whole-school environment is beautifully maintained and daily school life runs smoothly owing to the work of the highly effective administrative team. These many features contribute to the reasons why pupils enjoy school, feel safe and show above average rates of attendance. A particular strength of the school is the start that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children achieve well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve assessment procedures to help lift pupils' learning and overall achievement from satisfactory to at least good by:
 - strengthening teachers' skills at accurately assessing pupils' level of work
 - setting more precise targets for pupils' termly development and rigorously checking the rate of their progress, so that teachers know exactly how well each year group are doing
 - improving the quality of marking, so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work and have time to respond fully to teachers' comments
 - involving leaders at all levels in evaluating how well pupils do in the aspects and subjects that they are responsible for; this includes looking more rigorously at how well different ability groups make progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is good or outstanding by:
 - making sure that all lessons provide consistently well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and higher-ability pupils
 - carefully plan learning for the wide range of abilities in the classes, especially by streamlining lesson plans so that they do not contain immense amounts of unnecessary organisational detail
 - improving challenge and opportunities for independent problem solving and investigation in mathematics in the drive to further lift achievement
 - providing more time for the teaching of mathematics
 - widening opportunities for pupils to edit and extend their writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

From pupils' broadly average starting points, they make steady overall progress as they move through the school. Taking a three-year trend, attainment is average by the end of Year 6. Pupils work hard and enjoy the activities that are provided. For example, pupils in Year 4 thoroughly enjoyed the 'Roman Day' events. There has been a notable improvement in English since 2008. The reasons why pupils achieve well in English are a direct result of improvements to the curriculum, especially so that guided reading and writing opportunities have improved and boys' writing has developed well. All pupils enjoy being immersed in literacy activities, such as through book days and by visits from authors. In Year 6 pupils were highly motivated to write about *Oliver Twist* following drama-based activities; they eagerly explained how Oliver was both 'nervous and exhilarated' when acting as a pickpocket. In this lesson the most able were suitably challenged, but in some other lessons there are some missed opportunities to extend the most able pupils. The proportion of pupils who are making the expected or higher rates of progress in mathematics has increased this year. The work and lessons seen show that learning in mathematics is securely satisfactory and occasionally good, with a strong emphasis on doing basic calculation work, which had been a past weakness. Although pupils do some investigations, there are not enough of these to help pupils with their

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independent thinking and problem-solving skills. As such, sometimes, the work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils.

The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory; there has been some past underachievement, especially in mathematics, for a few pupils. The school is now addressing this. Nonetheless, occasionally their progress is inadequate because tasks are not suitable for them or not modified enough to allow them to practise and extend their basic skills. All staff are now working well to improve this. Teaching assistants are being redirected to work closely alongside pupils to aid their independent learning. In the past this group had been withdrawn too much from class learning activities; the school is now getting the balance better.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. There is an increasing proportion of good teaching, although there are not enough good and outstanding lessons to help pupils to make more rapid progress. Where teaching is best, the needs of all pupils are consistently well met in lessons. Here teachers provide lively, challenging lessons that move on at a swift pace and enable pupils to think independently, using problem-solving strategies, for example when pupils in Year 2 used a wide range of boxes, tubes and other materials to come up with their own designs for such things as rocket ships. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects being taught and relationships are always friendly. Adults manage behaviour well.

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Staff make effective use of information and communication technology. Occasionally, lessons are over directed by the adults. Lesson planning is often too detailed and does not always focus well enough on pupils' learning. The wide range of extra clubs and sporting opportunities enliven school life. A high proportion of time is allocated to English. In some instances insufficient time is allocated to mathematics. As a result of the improved curriculum the school has gained Healthy School Status, Activemark, the Eco-school Bronze Award and the Maidstone Youth Sport Achievement Award.

Inspectors fully support the headteacher's view, that assessment procedures are not accurate or helpful enough to lift achievement more rapidly. Work has begun in earnest to improve marking, but the quality is very variable. The best marking guides pupils in how to improve and does link to targets, as seen in some English work. However, even this is rarely used to help pupils to edit and extend their work. Marking is often lacking or ineffective in mathematics and science. Some staff accurately level pupils' work and set them targets and some are skilled at using ongoing assessment in lessons, but the quality and consistency of this is also too variable.

The school provides high-quality pastoral care from perceptive adults. Care has improved well since the last inspection, especially through the extended day and holiday activities in 'School's Out' and through the appointment of a very skilled family liaison officer. Links with a wide variety of support agencies contribute to the good care provided and there is a strong emphasis on the emotional well-being and the health of pupils and support for families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Work had begun on improving teaching and learning prior to the arrival of the new headteacher and this is being built upon through the headteacher's perceptive evaluations and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning have improved in mathematics and English and four out of every ten lessons are usually good. Staff are being helped to strengthen their assessment skills and by developing their lessons to take greater account of the learning of different groups. New initiatives are still bedding in, for example the way that pupils' progress is now being tracked and assessed, as this was not accurate enough in the past. Staff are at an early stage of beginning to have greater ownership and understanding of the overall outcomes for pupils in their classes and year groups, and in the subjects for which they are responsible; they are keenly developing their analytical skills.

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There has been a complete review of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities resulting in recent changes in the way that they are supported; this is helping to promote equal opportunities more effectively. Leaders are also currently focusing sharply on helping to ensure that the most able pupils do as well as possible. Discrimination, of any sort, is not tolerated, as is evident in the way that so many different pupils from different backgrounds get on well.

The governing body has made a significant contribution to improving the school site and the care of pupils. Safeguarding is promoted well and contributes to the good care provided. Members of the governing body call the school to account in general terms about the quality of outcomes for pupils but have only very recently become more aware about how to interpret school data regarding the performance of different groups of pupils; they are still strengthening their understanding of how to do this.

Particular strengths in community cohesion include the way that pupils are helped to respect different religious beliefs. The family liaison work contributes much to there being an inclusive ethos for parents, carers and the wider community, for example by providing classes for those in the community who speak English as an additional language. The school also engages in partnerships with five specialist local secondary schools, which helps pupils to learn foreign languages and business and enterprise skills. Leaders are aware that there is scope for greater work on widening pupils' knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a result of good leadership and effective teaching, children learn well and enjoy a wide range of highly suitable activities. Children are happy and well cared for and this is aided by the close links with parents and carers and the well-developed partnership with

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pre-schools. Since the last inspection, the outdoor learning area has improved well. Children enjoy learning in different ways. There is a good emphasis on basic skills, such as reading and writing and basic counting. Children quickly learn how to socialise with others and grow in maturity. Teaching and learning are good because staff understand the needs of young children and balance more formal teaching activities with those that children choose for themselves; there is a good emphasis on investigation, as is evident in their Forest School work.

As a result of the many positive features already mentioned, the outcomes for children are good. Attainment has been rising over the last two years so that it is now above average as children join Year 1. From children's wide-ranging starting points, this represents good achievement. Leaders are ambitious to make this even higher in the future. They understand that to do this, there needs to be a greater emphasis on helping more boys to reach the higher levels of attainment in writing. Also, boys and girls do not often enough reach the higher level in their understanding of shape, space and measurement. While the resources are often good, there is a lack of high-quality multicultural resources to help widen children's understanding of different local, national and international cultures.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over half of all parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They have confidence in the school and agree that their children are safe, enjoy school and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. A few feel that the school does not deal with any unacceptable behaviour well enough. Inspectors looked into this and found that the beginning of this new school year has seen a greater consistency of expectations by both staff and pupils, and behaviour has improved rapidly. Pupils told inspectors about this and were proud of their efforts. A few parents commented that they feel that their children do not always make sufficient progress. Inspectors found that, in lessons, pupils of average ability almost always do well. Sometimes there is variation in the progress made by pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities and the most able pupils. The current school improvement plan is focusing clearly on these groups. Most parents feel that they are kept well informed about their child's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at East Borough Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 246 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	123	54	106	43	7	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	124	50	115	47	5	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	62	25	143	58	34	14	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	69	28	129	52	34	14	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	86	35	140	57	11	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	33	136	55	24	10	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	37	142	58	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	70	28	135	55	18	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	28	139	57	25	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	61	25	132	54	35	14	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	22	146	59	27	11	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	67	27	141	57	10	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	36	145	59	9	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Borough Primary School, Maidstone, ME14 5DX

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. You go to a very happy school that is trying hard to improve things for you. Your new headteacher is very keen to help you do as well as possible in the future and she has already made many important changes to the school. Staff are kind, caring and keen. You are pleased about this and have already noticed that pupils' are behaving better than they did, and we agree that your behaviour is now good; well done! Please keep this up. You agree that you like school and learn new things, and this helps you to know the things that you need to be able to do in secondary school. You especially like the care shown by staff and you explained how you are helped to know about how to be healthy and how you do things for others in the community. We especially enjoyed seeing your work on Oliver Twist, the Roman Day work and some of your design and technology. We also found that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception classes are doing well. Your teachers work hard to make your lessons mostly very interesting. We have asked the adults to work on the following important things to improve the school for you.

- Make more of your lessons and activities good or even better, especially by making sure that those of you who find learning either difficult or easy always have work to do that is just right for you. We have also asked them to plan your learning as carefully as possible and to give you more opportunities for investigation in mathematics and time to edit and extend your writing.
- Improve the way that the adults check up on how well you are progressing; we call this assessment. One of the things that you will notice will be in the way that they mark your work, so that you know exactly how to improve.

We hope that all enjoy the rest of the autumn term and continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons

Additional inspector

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