

Evesham, Swan Lane First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116673
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	358005
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Coyle

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Morris
Headteacher	Mr Graham Walker
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons and observed all teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body, groups of pupils and parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including assessment and tracking information, the school development plan, monitoring reports and pupils' workbooks. The inspection questionnaires were analysed, including 69 from parents and carers, 11 from members of staff and 98 from pupils.

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

- Are boys guided and supported effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- Does the school use assessment effectively to track the progress of boys and girls?
- Are pupils' targets sufficiently challenging in reading and writing?

Information about the school

This school is situated within a residential area and is slightly larger than other schools of its type. The majority of pupils are White British and a few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number learn English as an additional language; the main languages spoken at home are Polish, Philippino and Latvian. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average: their needs are mainly specific and moderate learning difficulties. The school has been awarded the Activemark status for sports.

The school runs a daily breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It provides an effective education for its pupils and has some outstanding features: a rich and varied curriculum, excellent curricular provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and very effective procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils are strong aspects. As soon as parents, carers, pupils and visitors walk into the school, they are warmly greeted by staff within a highly colourful, clean and inviting environment. Stunning displays of pupils' artwork adorn the walls and exciting photographs of pupils at work and at play help to make the school a stimulating place in which to learn.

Parents and carers are pleased with the education provided for their children and comment that, 'The school is friendly and welcoming and our children are happy and settled.' They say that, 'Teachers are all very friendly and approachable, like a big family.' The school has good links with them and promotes good community cohesion locally and internationally through many neighbourhood events and strong links with children overseas.

Children get off to a good start and achieve well in the Reception classes, building effectively upon their knowledge and skills. Standards of attainment are above average by Year 2, and above those expected for their age by Year 5 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move up the school. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education, although the progress of boys is slightly behind that of the girls in writing. Even so, staff make sure that all pupils are equally valued and they work hard to promote the learning of boys to help them do as well as the girls. Inspection evidence and the school's data show that the most-able pupils do particularly well and attain high standards by the time they leave. The school ardently identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and helps them make good progress, although not all of those currently identified for early intervention require formal support. Attendance is good and most pupils behave well, taking on responsibilities willingly.

The quality of teaching is good. It is sometimes outstanding in all phases. Pupils have clear targets to help them in writing, but teachers' marking in mathematics does not always identify what pupils need to do next to improve their work and they do not have specific individual targets.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and senior leadership team are the driving force in the school and work hard to provide a strong sense of ambition. Self-evaluation is highly accurate. Leaders have successfully addressed the key issue identified at the time of the last inspection by improving the consistency of teaching in mathematics, and the school development plan rightly pinpoints the next steps. The governing body makes a good contribution to the life of school and takes its responsibilities seriously.

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Based on these good aspects and its good track record of improvement, rising standards and strong leadership, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that boys achieve as well as girls in writing so that the proportion reaching the nationally expected levels for their age is as good as that achieved by girls, and improve all pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.
- Fine tune the procedures for assessing pupils' work and their specific needs by:
 - more accurately identifying pupils who require early intervention support
 - ensuring that teachers' marking in mathematics provides pupils with sufficient guidance about how to improve their work
 - making sure that all pupils have individual targets in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From standards that are broadly typical on entry, and occasionally below, pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 to 5. The teacher assessments for Year 2 have been significantly above average over the last three years. This picture is corroborated by the inspection evidence taken from lesson observations, which confirms that pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 5. Girls have outperformed boys in the past but the gap is closing due to the school's effective classroom strategies to drive up standards. For instance, staff have strived to push up the attainment of boys in English and their hard work is beginning to pay off, although pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are inconsistent. Nevertheless, the school's successful focus on writing has had a noticeable effect on pupils' progress, and this is now rightly being extended so that similar techniques can be introduced in mathematics. For example, in a lesson about measurement, pupils in Year 5 made good progress in learning and enjoyed discussing the areas and perimeters of two-dimensional shapes due to the teachers' skilled questioning. Pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language are supported well to help them make good progress in literacy skills, such as in an exciting Year 2 lesson on the theme of writing invitations to 'Winnie the Witch's Birthday Party'.

Pupils attend school regularly and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are curious about the world around them and enjoy new experiences which broaden their understanding, such as in the school's recent 'Archaeological Dig'. Behaviour is mainly good and most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities respond well to the good support they are given. Pupils say they feel safe and know to whom they should go if they are worried about anything, especially if they experience any bullying in the upper year groups. All pupils understand how to live healthily by eating nutritious food and exercising regularly. They enjoy contributing to the school and local community, and the school council has provided good ideas for improving the school playground by the addition of a 'Pirate Ship' play area. Pupils develop their enterprise skills well by organising team sports and managing events for charities such as Children in Need. Links with the wider world are well developed and pupils participate eagerly in liaising with a school in France and a children's home in Kampala.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Classrooms are vibrant, colourful learning environments in which pupils' successes are celebrated very well. Good teaching and learning are assured across Years 1 to 5 and are characterised by appealing topics for pupils to enjoy, good relationships, brisk pace and an excellent use of interactive whiteboards. Teaching is outstanding when teachers have very high expectations and excellent rapport with pupils. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson on the archaeological discovery of Tutankhamen's tomb, the teacher's superb subject knowledge and inspirational sense of drama made learning great fun for the pupils and the enthusiastic teaching assistant! Assessment is used well to guide lesson planning and pupils have challenging targets for reading and writing. However, although marking is good in pupils' writing books, it is not as detailed in mathematics and does not give pupils specific targets or enough tips to help them improve their work.

The school's outstanding curriculum is very well organised and planned. It provides pupils with a wide range of richly varied learning opportunities and excellent creative links between subjects such as in the 'Big Writing' strategy, mathematics and art. Activities are adapted very well for gifted and talented pupils and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they have equal access to the curriculum. Personal, social, health education and citizenship are an integral part of learning, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop their independence and creativity in 'Forest School' activities. A

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wide array of extra-curricular clubs, outdoor pursuits and residential trips enhances pupils' enjoyment, as well as interesting breakfast club activities and visits to places of worship, such as a mosque, Hindu temple and synagogue.

The school cares for, guides and supports pupils exceedingly well in a very positive learning environment. Teaching staff know the pupils and their families well. Teaching assistants work as a very effective team to support small groups of pupils and individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including an overly high number identified for early intervention support. They liaise closely with class teachers to make sure that vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well supported in a sensitive way. Transition arrangements to the middle school are very well organised for pupils who leave at the end of Year 5. Pupils also benefit from the school's clean and exceptionally well maintained buildings and well-kept, attractive grounds. The procedures to promote good attendance are very effective and the school is vigilant in following up absences.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership is good. The headteacher and the two deputy headteachers join together as an ambitious senior leadership team, and each has a clear role to play in the running of the school. They manage the school well and have successfully focused on driving up standards in literacy and numeracy. Subject leadership is good and staff regularly check on the quality of teaching, although a few are new to their roles and are still developing their monitoring procedures. The school development plan clearly identifies specific areas for improvement and rightly includes the priority to raise the standards of boys. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and provides good support and challenge to the school. It has a clear action plan that rightly includes the future development of links with subject leaders.

Community cohesion is promoted well for the benefit of the pupils. The school has good strategies for building strong links with local neighbourhood groups, businesses and places of worship. It also has a few extended links nationally and globally to enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures. For example, the local vicar has been instrumental in forging close links between the school and a children's home in Kampala. The school values all of its pupils equally. It treats them as unique individuals so that all have equal opportunities to learning. Relationships with parents and carers are good because the school provides plenty of information for them and involves them in their children's learning.

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The school's good systems for safeguarding are rigorous, particularly for ensuring child protection and the safe recruitment of staff. Very clear procedures for risk assessments and regular training for staff ensure that systems are fully in place to maintain pupils' safety, and more training is planned for staff.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The curricular provision for children in the two Reception classes is outstanding because staff provide an highly colourful, stimulating environment and plenty of fun-filled, exciting activities. Routines are quickly established when children first start, and an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities is provided to encourage independence and creativity. Children make good progress from standards that are broadly in line with expectations when they start school, although attainment on entry varies from year to year and is sometimes below that expected for age. Most children attain the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the Reception year, and sometimes exceed them. All settle happily and learn to play well together, following adults' instructions well. They participate eagerly in creative and physical activities indoors and in the outdoor 'Atrium' where there are excellent resources for them to use. For example, good quality equipment such as wheeled toys, cars, tricycles, prams and pushchairs are easily accessible. Children know how to take care of themselves and play safely in well-supervised opportunities for running on the school field and using the apparatus in the adventure playground. Most children understand that eating healthy food is good for them and all enjoy eating crunchy apples and other fresh fruit at snack time.

Leadership and management are good. The leader and one class teacher are new to their roles but both adults work very well together with teaching assistants, supporting children effectively and taking excellent care of them. Because teaching is so good, children

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behave sensibly and develop their early reading, writing and numeracy skills effectively. They particularly enjoy practical tasks and role-play activities, such as making biscuits with their teachers who dress up as 'Bob and Betty Baker'; the tasting of jammy dodgers and custard creams is hugely enjoyed! Staff have made a concerted effort to increase the progress of boys by selecting topics that are particularly appealing to them. For instance, writing areas on themes such as 'Outer Space' and 'Undersea' capture children's imaginations and greatly interest boys and girls equally. Children listen carefully to stories and write clearly, forming letters well and sounding out words carefully. Superb displays on themes such as 'Diwali' celebrate children's work and promote teachers' high expectations of good standards. Assessment is used effectively to guide planning, and learning journals are regularly updated so that they record children's experiences well.

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

From the moderate number of responses received, the majority of parents and carers are positive about the work of the school and are pleased with the education provided for their children. They feel that the school is led and managed effectively and that staff make sure that children are safe. A small proportion feels that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and bullying. A few parents and carers would like more information about their children's progress. The inspectors followed up these concerns and found that most pupils behave well, although there are occasional incidents of misbehaviour which are managed well by staff. A good amount of information is shared with parents about pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Evesham, Swan Lane First 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 312 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	61	25	36	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	48	35	51	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	36	36	52	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	45	33	48	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	49	34	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	43	39	57	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	41	39	57	2	3	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)	27	39	38	55	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	35	39	57	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	34	49	10	14	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	33	36	52	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	44	64	24	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	64	23	33	1	1	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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Evesham, Swan Lane First School, Evesham, WR11 4QA

You may remember that we came to visit you recently and talked to some of you about your school. Thank you for being so kind to us and helping us to learn about all the things you do. Here are some of the things we found out.

You told us that you really like coming to school and enjoy learning about new topics, such as archaeology in Year 5 and the tomb of Tutankhamen.

We think you all make good progress in your learning and attain good standards because the teachers give you lots of exciting things to do.

Your behaviour is good and those of you on the school council take your responsibilities seriously - we really liked your idea for the 'Pirate Ship' in the playground!

Everyone understands that eating healthy food and exercising regularly are good for you. Your adventure play area in the field and the 'Atrium' area between the Reception classes are great places to have fun!

The teachers and the teaching assistants take excellent care of you and make sure that you are safe when you are in school.

The headteacher, deputy headteachers and the governing body lead and manage the school well, and want you all to do your very best.

We have asked your teachers to help the boys do as well as the girls in writing. We have also asked them to give you all some targets in mathematics and help you know what to do to improve your work when they mark your books. You can help by learning your times-tables and making sure that your handwriting is always neat and tidy.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

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