

Eastwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134860
Local Authority	Southend-On-Sea
Inspection number	341546
Inspection dates	30 June 2010–1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeanette Brown
Headteacher	Philip Davies
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons, observing 10 teachers, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. Informal discussions were also held with parents as they arrived with their children at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and improvement plans. They analysed 67 responses to the parental questionnaire, 139 to the pupils' survey and 26 to the staff questionnaire.

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

- how effectively teachers make clear to pupils the purpose behind what they are doing in each lesson and how to identify if they have been successful
- the extent to which pupils understand through marking and feedback how to improve their work and meet their targets
- how successfully the action being taken by the school is leading to improvements in teaching
- how well the school supports the academic and personal development of its more potentially vulnerable pupils.

Information about the school

Pupil numbers have started to rise again, having fallen sharply in recent years in this above average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has risen to well above average. Their needs are mostly associated with moderate learning difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and an Active Mark award. A Children's Centre, run by the governing body, has opened on the school site but was not part of this inspection.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not make the progress they should relative to their starting points on entry to the school. Consequently, pupils underachieve and attainment is too low. More than a third of pupils failed to reach the levels expected nationally in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2009, and the gap in attainment between boys and girls is not being eliminated. This difference is particularly noticeable in writing, where boys lag behind girls, but also in mathematics, where the opposite is the case.

The main reasons why underachievement is not being eliminated are that:

- too much teaching is inadequate or barely satisfactory and does not move the pupils' learning forward sufficiently rapidly
- assessment information is not used effectively by teachers, either to support their lesson planning or to challenge the more-able pupils
- individual pupil targets are not sufficiently challenging: they do not help pupils to improve their work to improve their progress
- the experiences provided by the curriculum fail to enthuse the pupils
- marking does not help the pupils identify how they can improve their work, and they are not consistently involved in assessing their progress or that of others
- not all parents support the action taken to improve low attendance levels.

Despite these shortcomings, this is a caring school, which is something the parents comment on and value. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the pupils' personal circumstances. The effective focus on promoting the safety and welfare of all pupils means that the majority say they feel safe and happy, and know there is always an adult to confide in if they have a problem. The new Children's Centre is a very useful addition because close links are forged with home at an early stage, including support for families in challenging circumstances, and are built on well across the rest of the school. This attention given to the well-being of the pupils and to the care and support provided for the personal development of the most potentially vulnerable is not matched by the effectiveness with which their academic achievement is promoted. Too many pupils are not given a firm basis for success in the future.

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Although the headteacher has a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the senior leadership team is not pulling together well enough to drive improvement. The sound start to the new school noted at the time of the last inspection has not been sustained because leaders at all levels are not taking the action needed to tackle underachievement. Weaknesses in teaching have not been addressed with sufficient rigour and the progress made by the pupils has declined. Teachers are not held to account for pupils' achievement in their classes. Priorities for action identified through the headteacher's thorough monitoring, such as improving marking and the presentation of the pupils' work, have not been acted upon. Taking all these factors into account, the school does not demonstrate the necessary capacity to secure sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' learning by:
 - ensuring that the more-able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons
 - making better use of assessment information to plan activities that increase the pace of pupils' learning and close gaps between the attainment of boys and girls
 - adopting strategies that engage pupils more so that they can take greater ownership of their learning
 - making better use of time in lessons to increase the pace of learning.
- Develop a more effective curriculum that:
 - promotes key skills, particularly writing, systematically across different subjects
 - makes learning more interesting by linking subjects more closely.
- Establish a consistent approach to marking so that pupils know how to improve their work, by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide a clear evaluation of pupils' strengths and the next important steps for their learning
 - pupils are involved more in setting their targets and assessing their progress and that of others.
- Generate a greater capacity for sustaining improvements in the school by:
 - defining clearly the roles of senior leaders
 - identifying where teachers' expertise needs improving and providing tailored professional development to improve outcomes for pupils
 - making sure that planned actions to tackle priorities are acted upon by all.
- Raise attendance levels by making parents fully aware of their responsibilities to minimise absence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Observations carried out during the inspection confirm that a pattern of underachievement has persisted over recent years. Pupils do not make adequate progress over time and are not learning new skills quickly enough in individual lessons. Pupils have not developed the

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learning skills or positive attitudes to their work that will stand them in good stead in the future, including listening carefully to each other and participating in discussions. A significant minority of pupils have limited concentration and perseverance, unless closely directed by an adult. They show little interest and enthusiasm and have little pride in their achievements, as shown by some poorly presented and careless work.

Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors and other adults. They know what is acceptable conduct and generally behave considerately towards each other. This helps to make the school a calm and orderly place. However, a significant minority of pupils and their parents and carers expressed concerns over the behaviour of others, although they also say that it has improved this year. Pupils respect each other's feelings but do not always take responsibility for their own actions. Behaviour in lessons occasionally impedes learning when teachers have to take time reinforcing their expectations.

When given the opportunity, pupils willingly reflect on their own experiences and enjoy sharing these with others. They greatly enjoy the sporting and cultural activities provided. They know how to make sensible choices over their diet, enjoy physical activities and participate in a wide range of after-school clubs including sailing. These positive features are reflected in the school's recent awards. The allotment helps give them a good insight into growing their own vegetables. They have a voice in school developments such as in deciding on the provision of resources for play at lunchtime, work with pupils from the nearby special school and support many charities through their fundraising efforts. However, their awareness of other cultures, especially those reflecting the complex nature of Britain's multi-ethnic society, is not sufficiently well developed.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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?

There is some effective teaching that engages the pupils through well-planned activities that stimulate and challenge, although this is very much in the minority. More typically, teachers' expectations are not high enough, and lessons provide only limited challenge for the more-able. Pace is often slow, activities and methods used are unimaginative and do not engage pupils in their learning. Teachers do not use assessment information to guide their planning to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Learning objectives are not identified clearly and opportunities are missed by teachers to assess pupils' progress towards intended learning outcomes. Explanations are not precise enough to help pupils to identify what they need to do to succeed. In spite of marking being identified as a weakness at the start of the year, it remains so and rarely helps pupils to see what they need to do to improve or meet their targets, particularly in writing.

Appropriate attention is paid to developing information and communication technology skills across different subjects, but limited opportunities are provided for writing in different contexts. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided. Sport benefits particularly from a close partnership with local schools, as do opportunities for drama activities such as the Year 6 end-of-term production. Some themed events such as 'multi-cultural week' and 'Blue Fridays' add interest to the pupils' experiences, but opportunities have not been taken to exploit links between subjects in order to extend the pupils' enjoyment and fascination of learning.

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The Children's Centre is a focus for the work of many agencies that provide valuable additional expertise in support of the school's more vulnerable pupils. These include various counselling agencies and parental support, which are supplemented by the work of the learning mentors. However, in spite of the school clearly identifying their individual needs, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not focused sufficiently in lessons and is a factor in their inadequate progress. Additional staff are not always deployed to move learning forward, and the impact of the extra support on their progress is not monitored effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
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?

The role of senior leaders in driving school improvement is not clearly defined. This means that, in spite of regular observations of learning and the analysis of assessment data, shortcomings in key aspects of provision, such as teaching, are not receiving sufficient attention and any improvement is patchy. Leaders and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but actions planned to tackle priorities are not always being followed through. Pupil targets have not been achieved consistently, even though they are not sufficiently challenging. The school has only very recently started to use assessment data to identify those pupils who are falling behind their targets so that teachers can take action to help them to catch up.

The impact of the governing body on the direction of the school has been limited until very recently. The exception to this has been the development of the Children's Centre. New procedures are enabling governors to check more closely on the school's performance and to ask searching questions about pupils' achievement. Staff and governors have put in place secure arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of the pupils and for making sure that those working with the pupils are properly vetted.

Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling any discrimination is at the heart of all that the school does, but it has been ineffective in closing gaps in performance between boys and girls. Senior leaders and the governing body understand the context within which the school operates and have planned activities to help promote community cohesion. However, they have not evaluated the impact of their work sufficiently so that they can identify what should be done next.

The school has many links with outside agencies. These contribute significantly to broadening the pupils' experiences and bring in valuable additional expertise in support of the more potentially vulnerable pupils that the school could not otherwise provide. Most

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parents feel well informed about their children's progress and development and value greatly the support they receive through activities such as parenting classes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
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	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Arrangements to ease the start of schooling for the youngest children benefit from close links with the Children's Centre and a productive relationship with parents, who value opportunities to work with their children in class on a regular basis. Children make satisfactory progress overall, but they start school with standards that are below the levels expected for their age and barely half reach the levels expected by the time they move into Year 1. Children enjoy their learning, particularly when exploring activities with others such as making a house from jigsaw blocks without adult support. They learn to take responsibility for developing their own ideas and become more independent as they move through the classes. They behave well and feel secure because of the emphasis by staff on ensuring that they are happy and that the environment they work in is safe.

Activities are provided both inside and out to support the children in all areas of their learning. Children make more rapid progress in literacy, particularly in the Nursery where activities are carefully planned to support their language development, such as when they made marks to describe the life cycle of the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. The balance between sessions led by an adult and those where children can develop their own ideas is appropriate, but there are times when adults miss the opportunity to intervene during a child-led activity to move learning forward more rapidly.

The relatively new team is starting to work well together. Regular assessment of the children's attainment and progress is used to ensure that planned activities meet their needs and interests. However, the baseline from which leaders can evaluate the

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effectiveness of each class is not sufficiently accurate as assessments on entry do not compare the children's skills against those expected nationally for their age.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are happy with most aspects of the school; they are almost unanimous in the view that their child is kept safe at school. Despite their concerns regarding behaviour management, inspectors judged behaviour, during the inspection, to be satisfactory and improving. Parents believe that teaching and their children's progress are good, or that they are prepared well for the future but inspection evidence does not suggest this is generally the case.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eastwood 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 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 272 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	57	20	30	7	10	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	36	54	30	45	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	48	28	42	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	55	24	36	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	46	33	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	40	35	52	5	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	48	32	48	3	4	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)	28	42	36	54	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	49	27	40	6	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	31	35	52	10	15	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	25	43	64	3	4	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	18	27	44	66	3	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	46	32	48	2	3	1	1

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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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.



2 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eastwood Primary School, Leigh on Sea, SS9 5UT

You will remember that we visited your school recently and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. Thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about your school. We had a chance to talk to quite a lot of you and we have told your teachers how you were very helpful and polite.

You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe and healthy. We agree that your teachers take good care of you. We recognise that Eastwood Primary School does some things well but there are weaknesses in important areas. For this reason, we have decided that the school requires special measures to help it to improve. Some of the teaching has not been good enough and this has led to you not making the progress of which you are capable. The main things we have asked the school to do are:

- make lessons more challenging and involve you more in your learning
- provide more interesting experiences that develop skills such as writing across subjects
- make marking more helpful and give you better guidance on how to reach your individual targets
- make sure everyone focuses on pushing forward improvements to the school more rapidly
- ensure that your parents help you to attend more regularly.

I am sure that the staff will do their best during the coming months to improve the school. They will be helped to carry out these improvements. Inspectors will visit regularly to check the progress that is being made. You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by coming to school regularly and doing your best in all your work.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale

Lead inspector

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