

Edward Francis Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115012
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357671
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Lumley
Headteacher	Gary Soars
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. One of these spent half a day in school checking the school's safeguarding procedures. Thirteen lessons were observed, involving all teachers. Meetings were held with the staff, governors and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school evaluation documents, data on pupils' progress, external monitoring reports and development planning. Responses from 73 parental and carer questionnaires were analysed.

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

- Has pupils' progress improved to a consistently satisfactory or better level?
- How well does the curriculum help the pupils to apply and develop their information and communication technology skills and their good level of literacy and numeracy skills?
- Are the new strategies for improving progress sufficiently embedded to sustain improvements?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized junior school serving the local area. It shares the site with the Edward Francis Infant School. Pupils are taught in eight classes, two for each year group. The headteacher has been in post since 2008.

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average.

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

2

Main findings

This school provides a satisfactory education for the pupils. Its effectiveness is improving and it has considerable strengths in its provision for the pupils' personal development.

The pupils' current progress is satisfactory overall, with good progress in mathematics. This represents good improvement in the rate of progress and is attributable to strategies introduced by the school, such as termly pupil progress meetings. Such strategies, introduced two years ago, have had a good impact and have halted the decline in progress made by more-able pupils. Progress in writing is broadly satisfactory, although a few of the more-able pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are capable. There are three areas hindering progress. First, progress in writing slows from entry to the school because the teachers do not have a clear understanding of how the pupils have been learning to write in the infant school and, therefore, cannot build on this. Second, introductions to lessons are not always pitched at the right level and are too long. Third, the pupils are not given enough time to write at length.

The pupils say they really enjoy 'theme' work which links subjects such as design and technology and history to make learning more interesting. The themes are planned very well and include the pupils' suggestions for topics they would like to pursue. For example, in a Harry Potter theme, the pupils had planned out and made a model of 'Hogwarts' school hall to show the seating plans. Older pupils were comparing locations such as Osmington Bay, the location for their residential visit, to the coast of Somalia. Currently, there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance their work and for research. Strong links with local schools have a positive impact on the teachers' professional development, as well as providing wider opportunities for the pupils to enjoy, such as a range of sports and sporting competitions, as well as French and special days at the local secondary school for gifted and talented pupils.

The teaching is satisfactory. The teachers' expertise in precise assessment is developing well. On occasions, though, the teachers do not use the knowledge gained from assessment to pitch their lessons at a level to challenge the pupils sufficiently. In the best lessons, the teachers check the pupils' understanding frequently and adjust questions or work accordingly. Relationships in classes are good and the pupils are very keen to work hard. The pupils' work is marked, but there is inconsistency in the usefulness of this marking in helping the pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

Behaviour is good and, when the teaching is good, it is outstanding. The pupils have well-developed social skills and good manners. They enjoy taking on a wide range of responsibilities around the school.

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The capacity for sustained improvement is good. The headteacher and senior team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. The governing body are very supportive of the school and put great emphasis on the pupils' safety and well-being. They recognise that, with several recently recruited governors, they need more training on how to interpret data provided about the school so that they can question and challenge from a more informed base.

Pupils who have the highest level of special educational need and/or disability and those in local authority care receive good care and support. They have good self-esteem and make sound progress because work and support are planned jointly with outside agencies to match their needs.

Links with parents and carers are good. For example, parents and carers are well supported in helping their children at home with theme work. Parents and carers appreciate the school's website and the regular newsletters which keep them well-informed.

Good systems identify groups or individuals experiencing difficulties with learning. The pupils are known well, so any unhappiness or uncharacteristic behaviour is noted quickly and support provided promptly. The pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to a consistently good level in order to increase progress and raise attainment further, especially in writing by:
 - planning to ensure that the pupils are challenged at an appropriate level in lesson introductions and by allowing them time to write at length
 - developing even better links with the infant school so that the junior school staff gain a better understanding of how writing is taught there
 - making more precise use of assessment to pitch lessons at the right level to challenge more-able pupils
 - making sure there is a suitable balance between teacher-talk and time for the pupils to work
 - monitoring lessons rigorously with a greater focus on the pupils' learning and progress.
- Raise standards further in ICT by:
 - providing the pupils with more opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning
 - making sure that the school achieves or betters the 2004 national target of one computer per eight pupils.
- Develop the governing body's understanding of data provided about the school, so that they can provide a good level of challenge to encourage the school to do even better by ensuring governors have opportunities to attend training on interpreting school data.

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- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory as they move from Year 3 to Year 6. The school's data indicate that progress has improved considerably in mathematics in the past two years, so that attainment is now well-above average. Progress in reading has improved similarly, so that attainment in reading is also well-above average. Progress in writing has improved, with almost all pupils making the expected progress. More-able and gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress, but a few who are capable of more than the expected progress are not being challenged. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as a whole and strong support has made a particular difference to some individuals, resulting in more confident learning.

The pupils enjoy learning. During the inspection, in a good lesson for a Year 6 mathematics group, the pupils demonstrated excellent behaviour and did not give up, even when they found the work of converting fractions to percentages challenging. A good deal of learning was consolidated and then extended by working out how much sugar to weigh if the total amount was reduced by 30%. In a 'theme' lesson, the pupils had fun practising tongue twisters and made good progress in identifying and using aspects of body language and facial expressions to develop presentation and public speaking skills.

The pupils' personal development is good. The pupils say that they like school and demonstrate this with their excellent attendance. As one pupil said, 'I think this is a fantastic school'. They show a good level of respect for one another's opinions and work very well in groups. Older pupils take pride in being members of the school council or a house captain. They know that their opinions are valued and believe that they make a difference to the school. The pupils learn 'play leader' skills, so that they can help younger pupils in the infant school. The pupils are enterprising; they organise fundraising activities such as car washing, for several national charities. They have a satisfactory understanding of their personal targets and what they have to do to improve further. For their ages, the pupils have an excellent understanding of safety with medicines, safety issues when using computers and always making sure friends or family know where they are. The pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. They run a 'healthy eating tuck shop' and they grow vegetables. They describe the need to have a balance of protein, carbohydrate and vitamins and that too much fat is not good for you.

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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	2
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	1
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	1
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?

The teachers manage their classes well. Key strengths are the good relationships and the pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. The teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to reinforce learning. In good lessons, there is a high level of challenge and productive balance between the teachers talking and giving the pupils time to work. These lessons move at a brisk pace. More typically, however, the pace is slower and, on occasions, the pupils sit for too long listening to lesson introductions. This feature was most noticeable in English lessons. The teachers are beginning to use precise assessment to plan future lessons, but on occasions the lessons lack challenge, especially for more-able pupils.

The curriculum provides a good balance of relevant and interesting themes which are enriched by a comprehensive range of visits and clubs. The programme for personal social, citizenship and health has a very good impact on the pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Sports partnerships and the willingness of the staff to run a good range of after school activities have a significant impact on the pupils' enthusiasm for sport and practical activities such as gardening.

The school has good systems for identifying and catering for pupils experiencing difficulties, so that any difficulties or unhappiness are noted very quickly and remedial action is taken. Strong links with specialist teachers or speech and language therapists are

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effective in ensuring that the pupils have the right equipment and/or work programme to help them at school. These links also help the teachers to develop their knowledge of specific methods to help pupils with a high level of need. As a result, these pupils have increased confidence in their own learning. Transition arrangements for children starting and leaving the school are good and appreciated by parents and carers and the pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governing body are keen to promote a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils develop as responsible young people and feel safe. In these respects, the school is very successful. The school's links with parents and carers are productive, especially in supporting homework. The quality of teaching is improving steadily. The good system for tracking pupils' progress is used well to hold the teachers to account for the progress the pupils make. The senior team undertake a regular programme of rigorous lesson observations to highlight strengths and weaknesses in teaching and to examine pupils' work carefully for misconceptions. The outcomes of this monitoring are used to highlight training needs or to develop new strategies to improve progress. For example, it was decided to organise 'setting' in mathematics for Year 5 after noting the success of a similar strategy for Year 6.

School development planning is comprehensive. The emphasis on detailed planning is improving the pupils' progress and provides evidence of the steady, good improvement over the past two years, how the school has achieved this and what it plans to do to improve progress further. The school has precise data regarding all groups', classes' and individuals' progress, but is not always making the best use of this in school development planning to set easily measurable success criteria.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well. A recently appointed learning mentor is already having a good impact on pupils' self-confidence. Gifted and talented pupils have opportunities to work with others when joint activities are planned with nearby schools.

The school promotes community cohesion within its own and local community very successfully. It has an appropriate plan to develop community cohesion further. It is at the stage of developing links with other schools in the United Kingdom and globally. Safeguarding procedures are good, updated regularly and known by all.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body receives informative reports from the headteachers of the infant and junior schools. They have received training from the headteachers regarding the data provided about the schools. Currently, though, they are

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not routinely questioning or challenging the school to do even better. For example, the school has a healthy budget, but it does not have as many computers for the pupils to use as is found in the great majority of schools.

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	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	2
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

Views of parents and carers

Just under a third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire and almost all agreed that they are happy with their children's experience at Edward Francis Junior. A small number of parents and carers raised two main concerns; that the school does not take account of their suggestions and that the school does not help their child to have a healthy lifestyle. They queried why the school could not provide hot meals. These concerns were followed up during the inspection. The headteacher and teaching staff make themselves available to parents and carers at the start and end of school days. There is a named parent/carer forum that collects parents' and carers' views and concerns and takes these to formal meetings with the headteacher. The reason why hot meals are not provided is historical; there has not been a great demand for hot school lunches and the governing body made the decision to wait until a viable number of parents and carers expressed an interest.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Edward Francis Community Junior 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	59	28	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	71	20	27	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	45	60	26	35	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	63	23	31	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	65	23	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	65	23	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	45	35	47	4	5	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)	46	61	25	33	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	59	26	35	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	52	32	43	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	51	29	39	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	63	24	32	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	75	18	24	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.



13 December 2010

Dear Children,

Inspection of Edward Francis Community Junior School, Rayleigh, SS6 8AZ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped us to make the judgements about your school, which is providing you with a satisfactory education. These are the things that were the best features:

- you enjoy school
- you have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves safe
- your behaviour is good and you work and play together very happily
- you are well looked after, particularly those of you who have particular needs.

There are some key areas where the school can improve. We have asked the headteacher, senior teachers and governing body to:

- help you to make even better progress, especially in writing, from when you start in school through to Year 6
- make sure that the teaching is always at least good and that the teachers tell you how to improve your work
- make sure that you have more opportunities to use computers in your work.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are very positive about learning and we were impressed with your good manners and how polite and helpful you are to visitors. You can help the school to improve by noting the teachers' marking, reading their comments about your work, and trying hard to implement their advice.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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