

Edwards Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134861
Local Authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	360645
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Wells
Headteacher	Jim Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, monitoring information, records of visits from local authority consultants, pupils' work, policy documents and records. Inspectors also considered the views of staff, pupils and 96 parents and carers through returned questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Have the previous inadequacies, in leadership and assessment to support learning, been eradicated?
- How effective is the support for pupils at risk of underachieving?
- How successfully are the previously reported inconsistencies in teaching being tackled?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes. The school was given a Notice to Improve in December 2009 for inadequacies in the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement and in the use of assessment to support learning.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement.

Leadership has been strengthened considerably at this school. Previous inadequacies have been eradicated. Senior leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. Leadership throughout the school has been developed so that middle leaders are now involved in driving school improvement effectively. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's improvement journey and talk enthusiastically about their own professional development over the last year. Capacity to sustain improvement is good.

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on target to reach broadly average attainment demonstrating satisfactory progress from their average starting points. There are clear signs throughout the school that attainment is rising. Because of the improvements seen since the last inspection, pupils in the current Year 5 are in a stronger position to reach above average attainment by the time they leave school next year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

The quality of provision has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum and provision to care, guide and support pupils are good. The proportion of good teaching has increased and previous weaknesses are being tackled successfully. In some classes teaching has improved considerably and, as a result, pupils in these classes are making accelerated progress. However, some inconsistencies remain so that about half the teaching seen was seen was satisfactory rather than good. In satisfactory lessons, the pace of learning is not as rapid. Too often in these lessons, teachers talk for too long. Pupils work at a slower pace because they are less motivated by their tasks. The challenge for more-able pupils is less well defined in satisfactory lessons than it is in those that are good and outstanding.

Marking, feedback and the use of assessment to support learning have improved considerably and this has been a central development in the improving outcomes for pupils. Good quality marking and verbal feedback are found in most classes and this is helping pupils to make better progress as they use this guidance to improve their work. However in a small number of classes, feedback is not used as effectively to guide pupils to improve their work.

The school regularly collects accurate data about the progress individuals and cohorts make. Different groups of pupils are being monitored carefully and the school is able to pin point patterns in progress for these pupils. Teachers and leaders use data well to discuss the progress of different groups and individuals. This information is effectively

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used to plan changes to teaching and intervention packages. Effective intervention is working in supporting pupils who are at risk of underachieving. In one intervention session seen, Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress as they worked with enthusiasm on filling the gaps in their mathematical knowledge. Enjoyment in this lesson was palpable because the teaching was very tightly focused on the each individual's needs. One pupil exclaimed 'I love SATS questions' as he was given additional challenge to embed his recent learning.

While the views of parents and carers on the whole are positive, a small minority expressed some concern about some of the decisions that have been made about staffing and behaviour. Inspectors looked very closely at these areas and found that the school was acting appropriately to secure continuing improvement within the school. Inspectors found that the school had worked hard to engage parents and carers. However, the views expressed in some questionnaires indicate that the school has not done enough to gain the trust and confidence of all groups of parents and carers in the decisions that are made by school leaders.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the great majority of lessons lead to good learning for all pupils by:
 - ensuring that all lessons are well paced and engaging
 - planning and delivering lessons where tasks and teacher's questions challenge more-able pupils
 - making sure all marking and feedback is sharply focused to support pupils' next steps in learning.
- Continue to develop strategies for engaging parents and carers in the life of the school so that most trust the decisions that are being taken by leaders.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy school. They say they feel safe and know where to go if they need help with issues they have. Relationship between pupils and teachers are strong and positive. Behaviour seen during inspection was good and pupils told us that it has improved a lot. Pupils say that the rules are 'stricter and fairer' than they have been in the past and that adults deal with incidents of poor behaviour quickly and effectively. One pupil stated 'I can't believe how quickly incidents are dealt with'. Pupils talk about a range of issues with thought and maturity. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles and talk convincingly about the decisions they make in their own lives to stay healthy.

In most lessons, pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils answer questions eagerly and are keen to please their teacher. In some satisfactory lessons, pupils tend to drift off task at times because they are given too much time to complete tasks and their concentration wanes. In good lessons the pace is rapid and engaging. Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer and learn at a good pace because the tasks in these lessons are at the right level of challenge for all groups. In these good lessons, pupils know exactly what they are learning about, what they need to do to be successful and how they can improve their work. In several lessons seen, pupils continually referred back to their success criteria to check that

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their work had all the characteristics the teacher was expecting to see. Pupils in one lesson used success criteria to check each others work and then improve their own work based on the feedback they received. This process led to rapid learning and a sense of success.

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	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?

Consistent approaches to teaching are being developed throughout the school. The school has developed a well thought out strategy for using assessment to support learning. This is central to the school's drive to improve the quality of teaching, ensuring that different groups are increasingly well planned for and intervention groups are tightly focused. Teachers' are able to identify the next steps each group needs to make in most classes. The reason why more able pupils are not achieving as well as they might in some classes is because some teachers are yet to develop the types of activities and questions that will encourage these pupils to think deeply.

The teaching seen during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding. Where teaching was outstanding, teachers skilfully moved pupils learning forward with exceptionally well placed guidance and questioning. In these lessons the range of challenging activities met the needs and interest of all pupils precisely. Good teaching is interesting and challenging so pupils have to think hard to complete their work. In these lessons, teachers have very high expectations and questions are used well to challenge

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individual pupils. Often, satisfactory teaching remained interesting but lacked the challenge and focus found in better lessons. In these lessons the pace of learning slowed when the activities took longer to explain, giving less time for pupils to work on tasks. In some of these lessons, pupils were more focused on completing their task without thinking too much about the quality of their work because teachers did not make clear their high expectations.

The curriculum is well organised and designed to ensure broad coverage of the national curriculum through interesting topics and themes. Extra activities are used effectively to enrich pupils' learning. Special weeks that focus on a particular theme are very well appreciated by pupils. A range of visits and visitors add further experiences beyond those found in the immediate locality. One such experience during inspection involved a South African story teller who used a range of props, personal stories and media images to help the pupils understand issues of prejudice and cultural identity. In this session, pupils were visibly moved and enthralled. Discussions afterwards illustrated the powerful impact it had on them and their attitudes. A further strength of the curriculum is the effectiveness of intervention strategies. These have been designed carefully to ensure they very specifically match the learning needs of pupils who have fallen behind.

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils are well cared for and know that adults will support them when needed. The school has robust systems for identifying when pupils are potentially vulnerable, and works with a range of partners to provide effective support for them and their families. Transition arrangements are secure with good links between different classes so pupils move through the school smoothly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a very accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They have taken swift and decisive action to deal with immediate priorities while ensuring improvement is sustained across all areas of the school. They have secured the backing and enthusiasm of staff. Some teaching staff spoke quite movingly about the difference the headteacher and deputy headteacher have made to their professional lives. Some teachers have made exceptional gains in their effectiveness in the last 12 months. Middle leaders have developed effective strategies for supporting whole school improvement in their areas of responsibility. They are proud of what has been achieved so far and they are ambitious for the future. Leaders at all levels are well informed and work well together to ensure the actions of all are focused in moving the school forward.

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The school works well with key partners to enhance its work. The local authority has worked closely with the school in providing additional support and expertise. Local authority notes show that the school has become less reliant on this support as new leaders have established themselves and middle leaders have developed a secure understanding of their roles. Further links with other local schools have worked to enhance the curriculum and to share opportunities for professional development.

The governing body is supportive and well informed. It has a sound overview of the school's main priorities. The governing body recognises the journey that they and the school have been on, with the last year being one of significant change. With increasing confidence the governing body is ensuring its statutory duties are met. Key members are leading developments to monitor the effectiveness of the schools provision with increasing accuracy.

Procedures for safeguarding are robust and regularly reviewed. Much work has taken place to ensure the site is secure and procedures are well known and rehearsed by adults working in school.

The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. Gaps in learning and attainment between different groups of pupils are closing. Incidents borne out of prejudice are rare and dealt with swiftly and effectively. Community cohesion within the school is strong and pupils get on well with each other and their teachers. Links with schools locally, within the United Kingdom and internationally have been developed to support the curriculum in helping pupils to appreciate and celebrate diversity and culture.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children become confident learners in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their learning. Adults and children get on noticeably well and children feel safe to ask questions, explore and learn through a good range of independent and adult-led activity. Good use is made of topics so different areas of learning are linked. During inspection, an Australian theme was used to set up activities that provided opportunities for children to create, read, measure, talk, use maps and explain their thinking. All of this was done with much excitement and interest. The indoor area is a bright and rich environment that captures children's imagination and supports early language development well. The outdoor area is satisfactory and provides a clean and welcoming space for pupils to play and explore. However, it lacks the exciting and rich learning stimulus that exists indoors.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear vision for further improvements. She knows the strengths of the unit well as a result of good monitoring and evaluation. Action plans are well focused on the next steps for improving provision further including developments to the outdoor area. Staff work well together. They are committed to ensuring all children make good progress while in Reception. Staff in the Reception support and challenge each other well. Judgements about progress are effectively moderated across both classes and learning is equally good across the unit.

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

The views of parents and carers are mixed. Most who expressed a view are happy with the school. Several commented on the positive difference that the current leadership team have made and others have commented positively about the progress their children are making. However a small minority of parents and carers expressed negative views about behaviour, communication with parents and the management of staff absences.

Inspectors looked carefully at all areas of concern and found that the school acted appropriately in its decision making process. Where information about the actions taken by the school has not been shared with parents and carers, this has been because it is confidential in nature. This specifically relates to the actions taken in response to the behaviour of individual pupils and the absence of staff. However, the school recognises that they could do more still to gain the trust of all parents and carers so that they have confidence in the decisions being made by the school, even when they are unable to share all of the facts and reasons with them. Inspectors found that behaviour in school was

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good and that pupils were unequivocal in their view that behaviour and the management of poor behaviour had improved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Edwards Hall 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 344 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	51	45	47	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	45	48	49	52	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	28	63	66	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	30	57	61	6	6	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	35	39	48	54	5	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	32	51	55	10	11	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	28	62	67	5	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)	26	31	50	59	7	8	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	26	59	64	5	5	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	22	53	59	13	14	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	24	52	60	10	11	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	37	41	47	52	5	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	39	52	56	4	4	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



17 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edwards Hall Primary School, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 5AQ

You may remember that I came to your school recently with two other inspectors. This letter is to tell you what we found. We found that your school has improved in many areas since inspectors last visited. We found that you are making better progress in many of your classes. We found that you are well cared for and enjoy your school. I was very impressed to hear from some of you about how you have helped to create the rules to improve behaviour in school. I was also pleased to hear from you that behaviour has improved. We found behaviour to be good - well done.

We have asked your school to make some more improvements. Your headteacher and teachers are already thinking about what they are going to do to make these things better.

I have asked your teachers to make sure all lessons are good so that you enjoy them and learn at a rapid pace. In the good lessons that we saw, we found that you worked hard and made good progress. We were particularly impressed with how well you knew what you were learning about and how you used the feedback in your books to make your work even better. We would like to see this in all of your lessons. We have also asked your teachers to make sure the most able pupils in your school are given work that is not too easy for them.

Some of your parents and carers worry about how well the school is doing and do not always feel that they know what is going on. I have asked your headteacher and governors to work especially hard at making sure your parents and carers feel fully involved and trust the school to make the best decisions for you.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for making us feel so welcome. Many of you were eager to tell us about your school and we enjoyed talking with you at lunch, in meetings and around school. You have my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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