

Edlesborough School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110225
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356705
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Barbara Atcheson

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Priscilla Dorrance
Headteacher	Jane Foster
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
School address	High Street Dunstable LU6 2HS
Telephone number	01525 220431
Fax number	01525 221819
Email address	manager@edlesborough.bucks.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons taught by 10 teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, planning documents, pupils' work and questionnaires returned from 100 pupils, 20 staff and 98 parents and carers.

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

- Pupil progress and, in particular, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, girls in mathematics and boys in English.
- Whether pace and challenge have improved since the last inspection in teaching and learning and whether assessment is used consistently to inform planning and to match tasks to pupils' needs.
- How effectively the new management team is managing teaching and learning, raising achievement and sustaining improvement.

Information about the school

The school is of average size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage into one Reception class. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009. Since September 2010, three new members of staff have been appointed and four teachers have left the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Edlesborough School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is improving securely at a rapid pace under the good leadership of the new headteacher. She has inspired her staff, who say that she has 'led us down paths we did not even know existed'. This is a school where the attainment of pupils is high at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and an above-average percentage of more able pupils reach the higher level (Level 5) at the end of Key Stage 2. However, until recently, progress across key stages has been inadequate. There has been a complete change in direction. Teachers say, 'We used to teach facts, now we are teaching children how to develop as learners.' The use of assessment to check pupils' progress accurately and to plan work that matches pupils' needs has been introduced and is used well in some parts of the school but, as this work is still in its early stages, there is a lack of consistency across the school. Teachers are thriving under the headteacher's strong lead and, even after such a short time, teaching is now securely satisfactory, good in some respects and still improving. This, together with a new exciting curriculum, has ensured that the pattern of inadequate pupil progress has been halted. All pupils now make at least satisfactory progress. Significant changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage under its new leader mean that children now get a good start to their education and achieve well. The newly formed senior management team has already helped to accelerate the pace of change. They have worked with the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body to undertake a thorough and accurate process of self-evaluation, which has motivated the whole school in a relentless focus on improvement. The successful actions taken to address deficiencies, which have improved the quality of teaching, increased the rate of pupil progress and instilled an enjoyment of learning, confirm the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

However, it is still early days and although the school's well-planned actions are becoming embedded, practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. Although much teaching is good, not all of the teachers have perfected the use of assessment to increase the rate of pupil progress beyond satisfactory. Teachers have concentrated so hard to successfully motivate pupils and give them a real joy in learning that their expectations of how pupils present their work have not been as high as they could be. Similarly, some have been so keen to deliver the exciting new curriculum that sometimes there is not enough time at the end of a lesson for pupils to properly reflect on their learning.

The school recognises that writing is the area of the curriculum where most improvement is needed. Whilst actions to promote every child as a writer have been successful, the school recognises the need to review its approach to spelling because pupils' skills in spelling are not always as well developed as they should be.

Parents and carers appreciate the changes that have been made and the good care, guidance and support their children receive. They have a positive view of the school

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because they recognise that it is a cohesive community which provides a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment. Pupils' consistently thoughtful behaviour is outstanding. Attendance is high and pupils feel safe, secure and ready to learn because of the good levels of safeguarding that exist.

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?

- By January 2012, improve pupils' writing by restructuring the school approach to spelling.
- By January 2012, improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use assessment effectively to accelerate pupil progress
 - all teachers have consistently high expectations with regard to the presentation of pupils' work
 - teachers plan for an appropriate amount of time for pupils to reflect on their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with varying levels of skills, knowledge and understanding but these are generally above those typically expected for their age. In all lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory progress or better regardless of their gender, ethnicity or ability. When the work planned for them is exciting, challenging and well matched to their needs, pupils show good levels of independence, work with sustained concentration and make good progress. For example, in a literacy lesson to accurately record information and construct relevant questions by planning an imaginary interview with Yuri Gagarin, Year 5 and 6 pupils showed a good knowledge of their learning. They said, 'It makes you think for yourself.' The teacher moved their learning on by giving them useful coach points at relevant stages in the lesson, and pupils used their 'steps to success' criteria to guide them and to assess whether they had achieved their learning objective. Where tasks are not so well matched to pupils' learning needs, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates because they get appropriately targeted support from their teachers and teaching assistants. Boys and girls make similar progress in mathematics and English and no discernible difference was seen in the rate of progress during lessons.

The positive ethos that results from the good care that pupils receive enables them to develop good personal qualities. Attendance is high and pupils' behaviour is outstanding. These two factors have made a significant contribution to the rapid improvement in progress, now that assessment strategies have been introduced and learning has become more challenging and more exciting. Pupils report that there is no bullying and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them. They are knowledgeable about how to stay safe and have a clear understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school council members are proud of the work they have done to have a water fountain installed.

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They have also made a 'friendship stop' in the playground in case anyone is lonely, and introduced a buddy system to ensure that playtime is a safe and happy time for all. The satisfactory progress that pupils are now making together with their high levels of behaviour and attendance means that they have a good understanding of the next steps they need to take to succeed in the future.

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	1
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	1
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?

Good relationships, enthusiastic teachers and an exciting curriculum based on pupils' interests ensure that pupils enjoy their learning. Although the curriculum is new, it has engendered a love of learning. Pupils record their work enthusiastically. However, it is not always as neat as it should be and spelling is not accurate. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and support them well so that pupils want to learn and do their best. Where teaching is good, activities are accurately matched to pupils' ability and teachers use their own good subject knowledge and understanding effectively to deepen and extend pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 information and communication technology lesson, pupils were editing their work using a variety of presentation techniques. Pupils enjoyed the lesson because teaching was focused and purposeful and there was a good level of challenge. The teacher used her own good subject knowledge to ask questions to assess pupils' level of understanding. Her accurate use of subject-specific language helped increase pupils' vocabulary and move their

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learning on. Where teachers' assessment skills are less honed, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. In some lessons, the introduction is too long and although teachers generally make sure pupils have time to complete their own tasks, the time for reflection at the end of the lesson is too short and hurried and therefore does not always consolidate learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and support learning effectively. Vulnerable pupils receive the right level of support, which enables them to make appropriate progress in developing social and life skills.

Pupils feel happy and secure because they know that there is a good level of care, guidance and support and that there is always someone there to listen, help or advise. Vulnerable pupils benefit from this nurturing environment, which provides them with effective support which is well tailored to their needs, and this is appreciated by pupils, parents and carers.

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 new headteacher has been a driving force in bringing about significant improvement in the work of the school. She now has a new, knowledgeable team of senior leaders who, although they have been members of the team for a relatively short while, have been active participants in all of the initiatives and instrumental in helping to manage change. Staff are now fully aware of and share the leadership teams' vision for the future. Visits to schools where there is excellent practice, and the temporary secondment of an outstanding practitioner, have helped to demonstrate what high quality teaching looks like. Staff have been willing to take on the challenge and senior leaders have encouraged and supported them so that although inconsistencies still exist, the proportion of good teaching is increasing.

A large number of the governing body are new and there is a new Chair. This, together with the change in the school's senior leadership, and training, has brought a fresh outlook to the way that members of the governing body challenge and support the school. They are making it their business to acquaint themselves with what goes on in school and are becoming increasingly well informed and better placed to make a more strategic contribution to the work of the school. However, as with most of the school's work, although good systems and procedures have been set in place, there has been insufficient time to demonstrate the full impact of these important changes.

Good relationships with parents and carers support pupils' learning in a positive way. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination is satisfactory. The school's accurate tracking system highlights any underperformance. Consequently, the

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school recognises that progress is not yet consistently good across the school. Procedures for safeguarding are good and ensure that all pupils feel safe and that their emotional and social needs are met. The site is secure, entry is restricted and visitors monitored. Checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and child protection arrangements are secure and updated regularly. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and records are kept meticulously.

The school's strategy to promote community cohesion is good and the school's links with a school in Luton, where pupils come from very different ethnic backgrounds, and their links with a school in Mongolia have given pupils a clear understanding of the culture, lives and beliefs of people in the wider world.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been significantly improved since the last inspection and is now good. Following visits to settings where provision is judged to be outstanding, the new leader has worked hard with her team to successfully implement significant changes to provide a stimulating learning environment both in and out of doors.

The children settle quickly to the welcoming atmosphere because personal development is very good, relationships are strong and the children are well cared for. They all chant 'We share, we care, we always play fair' with enthusiasm and practise it within the classroom, showing a high level of concern and respect for one another. Relationships are good and staff foster positive attitudes to learning and, as a result, behaviour is good and children are confident and sustain their concentration. Staff know the children well and encourage independent learning skills through a range of exciting opportunities for child-initiated learning and challenging adult-led activities. As a result, children make good progress. For example, there was a good level of challenge in an activity to add two or more numbers.

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Children could explain their answers for one more than or one less than 16, whilst more able children went on to write number sentences for 19. A rousing action song consolidated their learning and it was evident that both children and staff enjoyed the experience.

A group of children who were using exciting words to describe the mini-beasts they had been investigating discussed what they had seen with the teacher. Having rehearsed and clarified their ideas, they used their letter sound strips to help them write simple sentences with plausible spelling, confident in the knowledge that if they did get stuck, the teacher would support them. Meanwhile outside, two boys who were playing with bats and balls considered the advice of the teaching assistant and consequently improved their game. Good opportunities exist outside for children to read books, to write wedding invitations in the 'castle' or shopping lists in the garden centre. They enjoy using the apparatus to practise climbing up, over and through and to weave spiders' webs around the supports. Assessment procedures are good, although the team recognises there is more work to be done on the records in the children's 'learning journeys'.

Partnerships with parents and transition arrangements are good and all safeguarding procedures are securely in place. The good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has effectively ensured that what the children do in school is related to their individual needs, welfare, learning and development.

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

In the above average return, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were positive about most aspects of school life. Evidence from the inspection supports parents' views that children enjoy school, and that care for their health and safety is good. Parents are very happy with the teaching that their children receive and the way that the school is led and managed. A very large majority say they are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few indicated that they did not think that their child was making enough progress. Evidence from the inspection shows that all groups of pupils now make satisfactory progress and a growing number are making good progress. A few felt that school was not doing enough to help them support their children's learning. Evidence shows that the school has already had some meetings for parents but has plans to keep parents more informed and to give more guidance in helping parents support their children. The concerns raised by a few parents about whether the school meets their child's particular need mainly revolve around the mixed-age grouping, which some feel 'holds older children back', despite meetings held to

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explain this and alleviate concerns. Evidence from the inspection shows clearly that in mixed-aged classes, progress is accelerating and older pupils, particularly Year 4 are making good progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Edlesborough 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	62	37	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	77	23	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	48	47	48	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	29	52	53	14	14	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	45	47	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	32	47	48	12	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	42	51	52	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	34	52	53	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	36	45	46	11	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	40	54	55	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	35	49	50	6	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	50	42	43	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	52	37	38	4	4	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edlesborough School, Edlesborough LU6 2HS

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. You were very helpful, polite and friendly. Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education and there are a lot of things your school does well.

You told us that you thoroughly enjoy school and that you feel very safe. We found that everybody in school looks after you well, especially those of you who have difficulties from time to time. We were impressed with your high attendance rate and your clear understanding and knowledge of how to keep healthy. We could see that you behave very well, get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly.

Your headteacher and other staff know that there is still work to be done to make the school even better. We have asked the school to do two things.

- It should make sure that you all have the right skills to help you to spell correctly.
- It should ensure that all teachers have a true picture of exactly where you are all up to so that they can help you to do your best all of the time. We have suggested that the teachers should expect only your neatest, most accurate work at all times, and that you should be given enough time to reflect on what you have learned in each lesson.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest, especially with your spelling and presentation, so that you are even more successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Atcheson

Lead inspector

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