

Everton Lower School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109450
Local Authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	377922
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Marion Wallace

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Inman
Headteacher	Julie Ashwell
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2006
School address	Potton Road Sandy SG19 2LE
Telephone number	01767 680534
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Registered childcare provision	Evertots
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	10
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	N/A

Age group	3–9
Inspection date(s)	20–21 October 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed five different teachers in 16 lessons. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan and those of the subject departments, minutes of governing body meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition they carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work and analysed 35 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The consistency in the quality of provision and learning in different subjects in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4.
- The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and by gifted and talented pupils.
- The effectiveness of strategies to maintain standards and consistently good progress throughout the school, particularly in the mixed-age classes.

Information about the school

Everton Lower School is a small school. Most pupils come from Everton and the surrounding villages. A large majority of the pupils are White British, and a very small minority are from minority ethnic groups. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average, but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The main special needs are learning difficulties and physical disabilities. There are two mixed-age classes, for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in one class for Reception children and a pre-school for Nursery children. The pre-school was opened in September 2010 and runs mornings only in the school hall. This was also included in the 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Everton Lower is an outstanding school where pupils of all abilities consistently achieve extremely well. Pupils and their parents and carers greatly appreciate the high-quality care and enjoyable learning opportunities. Pupils were unanimous in their positive comments and could not fault the school in any way: 'It is fabulous, we like everything about the school including the playground, swimming pool, choir, literacy and numeracy.' Parents and carers were also enthusiastic, and one summed up the school: 'A brilliant school where children love to learn. The Everton team are fantastic and value each child for who they are, encouraging self-belief and a spirit of you can do anything you want to do if you try hard enough, nothing is impossible.'

These are the key strengths of the school.

- Pupils make excellent progress and consequently standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above those expected for all groups of pupils because the quality of teaching and learning is consistently outstanding.
- Relationships are extremely strong, the school ethos is very warm and welcoming, and pupils make excellent gains in their personal development.
- Excellent attendance contributes significantly to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make excellent progress in music and their singing is very good.
- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the very positive learning activities and the sheer enjoyment of the children. The pre-school is making a valuable contribution to the Early Years Foundation Stage experience.
- Care, guidance and support are extremely strong, so pupils behave superbly well and are mature, sensible and enthusiastic learners. A parent commented, 'Teachers know the children very well and any problems are noticed at once and solutions planned.'
- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well and consequently they develop an extremely positive attitude to their learning.
- The headteacher and governing body lead the school exceptionally well and have a very clear vision for its future improvement. Parents and carers commented on the inspirational leadership of the headteacher.
- Excellent links with parents and carers, the local community and external agencies contribute very effectively to the provision.

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The key areas to develop are as follows.

- Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the school and local community, but their understanding of national and global initiatives, and their knowledge and awareness of cultures and religions different from their own, are less well developed.

There is an excellent commitment from all staff to provide each pupil with the very best possible education. Equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination are pursued determinedly. There is also a continual drive for improvement. The very effective systems for evaluating the strengths and further areas for development of the school are playing their part in sustaining high standards over time and adapting to changes within the school. The school's excellent organisation and strong, shared vision demonstrate its outstanding capacity to continue moving forward.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils learn more about different religions and cultures, by:
 - tracking the impact of the school's initiatives to improve provision of the national and global dimensions of community cohesion
 - using the information gained to enhance current provision and ensure that pupils have more opportunities to mix with people from other cultural backgrounds.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

From starting points that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, all groups of pupils make excellent progress. Exceptional attainment was seen during the inspection in Years 2 and 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, but also in subjects such as music and information and communication technology. All groups of pupils are consistently challenged to aim high. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make excellent progress compared to their peers nationally. They develop confidence in all aspects of their work because they are encouraged to try their best at all times and believe that they can achieve anything they want to do. The school's tracking and the inspection evidence indicate that all pupils are on course to reach or exceed their challenging targets. These outcomes are contributing extremely well to pupils' future economic well-being.

Pupils really enjoy learning because lessons are very well planned and excellent relationships contribute to an exciting climate for learning. Writing is very good throughout the school and in subjects other than English. Pupils enjoy writing because they learn to take a pride in the quality of what they write and how they do it. Handwriting is neat and work is well presented. They learn to use description well and consequently writing is lively and interesting. One Year 4 pupil wrote, 'The powerful whales were swimming in the deep blue ocean.' Older pupils use

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paragraphs and punctuation well. A Year 2 pupil writing about Goldilocks and the three bears wrote, 'She was really hungry and she tried the porridge in the big bowl, Ouch! It was too hot.' She tried the porridge in the little bowl, 'Yuk it was too cold!' Goldilocks tried the porridge in the middle size bowl, 'Yum, yum, lovely!' 'She ate it all up.'

More-able Year 2 pupils made excellent progress in learning to tell the time and understand differences in time because the teacher skilfully used a metronome to help them see the difference between fast and slow beats. Pupils in a Year 1 and 2 class, including gifted and talented pupils and some with special educational needs and/or disabilities, made excellent progress in a music lesson learning to read music notation and play a percussion instrument following notation.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, and say they feel extremely safe because relationships are excellent and they can discuss any problems they have with adults. Pupils talk extremely knowledgeably about maintaining a healthy lifestyle and the good range of clubs and activities are well attended. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school and local community. The school choir sing at the local supermarket, regional and national events. Parents, carers, Grandparents and members of the governing body are regularly invited into school for lunch and to listen to the choir. Pupils regularly raise money for charities. They reflect maturely on issues facing the world today. Their knowledge and awareness of other cultures, ethnicities and religions is relatively limited but they are tolerant and kind to others, whatever their background.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
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

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How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons observed during the inspection were at least good, and many were outstanding. Teachers use assessment information very well to plan work that matches the needs of all pupils within the mixed-age classes. More-able pupils, gifted and talented and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are challenged extremely well. Teachers use questions effectively to check pupils’ knowledge and understanding and give good oral feedback to pupils on how to improve their work, including through effective marking. Teaching assistants support pupils with additional needs very well, so they make the same excellent progress as others. One pupil with additional needs was fully involved in a role-play activity, cooperating superbly well with other pupils in planning and making a dinner for Badger the class puppet. Pupils learn to assess and comment on the quality of their own work. One pupil wrote, ‘I need to improve spelling.’

The curriculum is planned well and matched to the needs of all groups of pupils. They enjoy the curriculum and this contributes to their growing enthusiasm for learning. Literacy, numeracy and information communication technology skills are used well in other subjects. The strong personal and social education programme assists pupils’ personal development. Curriculum enrichment is very good and the wide range of visits, clubs and activities are popular and well attended. A visit to a local farm helped pupils gain an excellent awareness and knowledge of crop rotation and the correct moisture content of wheat and barley to make flour. They were able to describe how wheat and barley with too much moisture was sold to make beer. The way pupils’ knowledge of global religions, traditions and festivals is promoted through the curriculum is, however, limited.

Pupils’ needs are central to the work of the school and all adults very effectively help children and their parents and carers to get the best from learning through excellent communications. Support for pupils who need additional help is very effective and the school works extremely well with external support agencies in this respect. Excellent arrangements for children entering the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, at other points during the school year and when moving on to other schools support transition very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The continual improvements and high standards consistently maintained over time are a result of the headteacher’s superb leadership and skilful management. Drive and ambition to develop the school still further are extremely strong. There is very strong, enthusiastic commitment from staff to provide each pupil with the best possible education. Leaders have a very thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher is dedicated to making sure pupils achieve their best and that staff bring high quality to their work. Pupils’ work is monitored rigorously; any pupils who need additional help or challenge are supported extremely well. The headteacher is an excellent role model and leads the school with competence and compassion.

The governing body supports staff and challenges the school superbly well to ensure school improvement initiatives are successful. Tracking of progress over time is very thorough and senior leaders quickly identify any dips in standards and swiftly apply sensible strategies and interventions to ensure improvement. Initiatives such as the proposed school shop and other developmental areas to further improve the effectiveness of the school are clearly identified in the school improvement plan.

The school promotes equalities expertly, as reflected in the profile of high achievement across different groups. All safeguarding procedures and checks on adults are robust. Child protection, risk assessment and safeguarding procedures are rigorous and meet current statutory requirements. Excellent partnership links with parents and carers, local schools and various support agencies contribute to the school’s excellent provision. The school deploys its resources extremely well, particularly to improve provision for pupils who need extra support or challenge. The school has rigorously audited the way it promotes community cohesion. There are effective plans to develop links with a school in Uganda and in other parts of the United Kingdom. It is well aware that pupils have a strong understanding of their school and immediate area and do a great deal to help the local community, but do not have enough opportunities to mix with people from other cultural backgrounds.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The pre-school provision fully complies with requirements for registration. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are extremely well cared for and flourish because they enjoy the activities. Excellent communication with parents and carers and excellent preparation ensure that children settle very well into the pre-school and Reception class. Parents and carers commented on how well children settled into school life and how much their children looked forward to coming to school each day.

Teaching is excellent and all children in both the pre-school and Reception are fully challenged so that they make outstanding progress across all areas of learning. Staff are skilled in providing a wide range of challenging activities, both indoors and outside. They encourage children to learn to share, consider others and develop their communication skills. Reception children showed high levels of awareness and care for each other as they shared the carts on the playground. They show excellent levels of responsibility for their age when registering themselves on arrival. Good teaching of phonics challenges children rigorously to sound words clearly and recognise sounds in words. Pre-school children write simple words; Reception children write more difficult words containing more sounds.

Learning is well structured through effective planning to develop basic skills in communication as well as social and emotional skills. There is a very strong focus on ensuring young children learn from first-hand experience and their own interests. Children are very enthusiastic and receptive to learning. Pre-school children enjoyed observing spiders through lenses and this resulted in a lot of excited language about the size and movement of the spiders and counting legs. Excellent use of questions ensured children were both challenged and supported. There was an excellent focus on hygiene after handling the spiders.

All activities are carefully planned with a good balance between activities led by adults and those children choose for themselves. The outdoor learning environment is used very effectively to stimulate learning, and excite and interest the children. Role-play activities promote excellent learning. Reception children were highly motivated to create a bus ride to the airport. They organised the bus, selecting a paper plate for the driving wheel and allocating roles of passengers and a driver. They knew they would need help with the route to the airport and decided to install a satellite navigation device in their bus. The teacher suggested a map but the children seemed happier with the modern device. The provision is led and managed extremely well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was particularly high. The overwhelming majority are extremely happy with the school. They feel it is very welcoming and friendly. All say that their children enjoy attending, regard the school as extremely caring and supportive, and identify a wide range of strengths in the school, including the improvements to the school building. The very few criticisms were mainly to do with information about progress and how the school takes account of suggestions and concerns. Inspectors judged that parents and carers were well informed about their children’s progress, but do not always have the opportunities to be fully involved in decision making on key matters.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Everton Lower 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 43 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	74	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	63	13	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	49	15	43	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	54	14	40	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	19	54	15	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	19	54	16	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	66	10	29	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	49	17	49	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	54	14	40	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	46	14	40	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	46	16	46	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	60	13	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	19	54	16	46	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 8 April 2011 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.

24 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Everton Lower School, Sandy, SG19 2LE

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. We will remember your excellent singing in assembly and how extremely polite and considerate you all were, and how well you all behaved. You and your parents and carers told us that Everton Lower is an excellent school, and we agree. These are the things we found that your school does particularly well.

- You get off to a superb start in the pre-school and Reception class and make excellent progress through the school. You reach standards by the end of Year 4 that are much better than most pupils of your age achieve because teaching is outstanding.
- You all enjoy learning very much and your attendance is extremely high.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are extremely sensible; you know how to keep safe and can talk very knowledgeably about keeping yourselves fit and healthy.
- You really enjoy and benefit from the many fun activities, clubs, visits and visitors.
- Your school cares for you extremely well and teaches you a lot about how to care for others.
- Your singing is superb and you all make excellent progress in learning to read music and play musical instruments.
- You have excellent links with your local community, who are fully included in things that you do at your school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school extremely well. All the staff work very effectively together as a team to make sure that Everton Lower is a very safe and secure, fun place to learn.

There is one thing I have identified for staff and governors to improve.

- Make sure that your teachers give you more opportunities to learn about different people in the world, in this country and abroad.

Thank you for a very enjoyable and memorable visit to your school and best wishes for your future. You can all help by continuing to work really hard.

Yours sincerely

Marion Wallace
Lead inspector

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