

Edward the Elder Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135318
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	381868
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Derek Aitken

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Jones
Headteacher	Nick Cunliffe
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Aitken

Additional inspector

Richard Boswell

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. On the second day of the inspection two year groups were out of school on educational visits. Inspectors visited 16 lessons taught by nine teachers, and scrutinised pupils' work in English and other subjects. Inspectors listened to pupils in Key Stage 1 reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 71 parents and carers, 86 pupils and 20 staff.

Information about the school

Edward the Elder Primary is slightly smaller than most primary schools. It was formed four years ago as the result of an amalgamation of two schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but almost one in four pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two part-time Nursery classes and one Reception class.

The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

A breakfast- and after-school club operates on the school site. This is managed by the governing body and was observed as part of 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school, which has made considerable improvements since the last inspection. It is not outstanding because leaders and the governing body have not ironed out minor variations in the quality of teaching or attendance, so pupils' achievement is not yet better than good.
- Pupils achieve well during their time in school, and leave at the end of Year 6 with average attainment. This represents good progress for the first group of pupils in the older year groups, whose starting points were below average. Progress is better for pupils of lower and middle ability, and although the most able pupils make good progress overall, they do not always reach the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Teaching is good. A few outstanding elements were observed, for example in focused literacy support programmes. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory, assessment and personal targets are not used to best advantage to direct and develop pupils' learning and promote their independence. This particularly affects the more-able pupils.
- Pupils behave well. Children in Nursery and Reception mix well with each other and participate fully in lessons. Almost all pupils are keen to help each other and collaborate well in shared activities. Pupils, and their parents and carers, believe that they are well cared for and that the school is a safe place. Some opportunities are missed for pupils to develop leadership skills.
- Staff, under the purposeful guidance of senior leaders, have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' performance across the school. Less focus has been placed on raising rates of attendance, which, despite recent improvement, remain below average. New governors have yet to acquire the expertise to make a full contribution to strategic planning or hold leaders sharply to account.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' achievement, especially for more-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring best practice is consistently followed by teachers in the use of assessment to plan, review and extend pupils' learning
 - sharing long-term targets with older pupils to enhance their self-knowledge and involve them more fully in assessing and improving their work over time
 - enhancing pupils' self-confidence through providing them with a wide range of useful opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills.

- Ensure attendance is raised to at least 94.5% by July 2013, by:
 - improving the coordination and effectiveness of all systems, strategies and procedures to promote the importance of attendance to pupils, parents and carers.

- Ensure that new members of the governing body quickly acquire the expertise to enable them to contribute fully to the work of the school and hold senior leaders firmly to account.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are correct in their view that their children achieve well. Children's attainment on entry to Nursery is below that expected for their age. They make good progress as the curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well planned. Children fully enjoy the varied, exciting possibilities for outdoor learning provided by the substantial improvements made to facilities, although on a few occasions opportunities are missed to challenge the more-able children. In the last two years children's progress has quickened so that most children start Year 1 with levels of skills and knowledge in line with their national peers.

Pupils' attainment and rates of progress rise steadily from Year 1. This is sustained well for most year groups until the end of Year 6, especially for pupils of lower and middle ability in English and mathematics. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than their national peers. There is no variation between the achievement of White British pupils and that of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are challenged and supported well by staff and also make good progress. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson these pupils were successfully helped to draw on their prior mathematical knowledge to construct plausible estimates of different weights.

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A strong emphasis on improving pupils' literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 through letters and sounds and reading programmes has had a notable impact on improving pupils' reading skills. By the end of Years 2 and 6 attainment in reading has risen to average levels. Pupils enjoy reading, accurately recall characters in stories, split up unfamiliar words correctly then blend them together properly to sound them out. Less-able pupils correct any mistakes and read with pleasing fluency. Pupils' attainment in terms of mathematical and writing skills is also average. Able Year 6 pupils present their work very clearly, aligned to short-term targets. They write convincing structured accounts using a wide range of sophisticated vocabulary, for example about the advantages and disadvantages of genetically modified foods.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers rightly believe that pupils are taught well, and their children agree. Teachers' good expectations for pupils' progress and behaviour foster secure relationships and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respond well to 'beat the clock challenges' and demonstrate a confident and accurate command of basic mathematical calculations, such as multiplication. The curriculum provides a good framework for teachers' planning. This is clear, and, for the most part, well thought out to provide opportunities to support pupils' learning, especially in the acquisition and reinforcement of early literacy skills.

Lessons are usually characterised by a brisk pace and suitable levels of challenge for all group of pupils. Teachers make good use of focused questions and provide ample opportunities for pupils to acquire and practise orally subject-specific vocabulary. This was displayed in a good science lesson when younger pupils explained convincingly their observations of different chemical reactions. Similarly, Year 6 pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of mathematical principles in working through a series of graded questions on probability. A few pupils benefit from outstanding teaching in individually focused, highly effective short literacy programmes. Teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs skilfully, for example in developing their understanding of sentence construction and units of measurement through computer programs.

On a few occasions teaching is only satisfactory, for example when assessment is used less well to plan, review and extend pupils' learning. Opportunities are missed to develop thinking skills and challenge more-able pupils. Most marking provides pupils with useful guidance on how to improve. Older pupils benefit from short-term targets which help them to evaluate individual pieces of work. Not enough use is made of long-term goals to involve pupils more regularly in self-assessment and to enable them to take greater responsibility for their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' hardworking approach and willing attitude are important factors in their enjoyment of lessons and their good achievement. Children settle well in Nursery,

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quickly forging trusting relationships with each other and the staff. They focus well, and during the inspection several Reception children responded confidently and spontaneously to adults' questions. They report that one of the essentials of good listening is to show 'you are not fiddling'. Nearly all pupils are keen to collaborate, and support each other very effectively in paired and group tasks.

On a few occasions pupils do not concentrate fully when questioning is not varied enough to sustain their attention. A very few disaffected pupils sometimes lose focus in lessons, but their behaviour is managed firmly by staff. Pupils respect the school rules and respond appropriately to reminders, praise and rewards for good behaviour. They behave well in public areas, such as school corridors, the playground and in assemblies. They understand the school's expectations and respond promptly to guidance, as reflected in the limited incidence of exclusions in the schools' records. These records also demonstrate that exclusions have reduced substantially in the last three years and that any untoward incidents, including those with a homophobic or racist perspective, are extremely rare.

Pupils have a clear sense of the school as a cohesive community, where pupils of different ethnic backgrounds play and work happily together. Opportunities for older pupils to take on positions of responsibility and acquire self-esteem through contributing actively to school life are satisfactory rather than good, and this is sometimes reflected in their lack of confidence in expressing ideas in lessons. Pupils report that bullying in any form is uncommon, and that it is swiftly dealt with by the staff if it does occur. They also add that they feel safe and well cared for in school, including through the well-organised breakfast- and after-school club. This view is shared unanimously by the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. Two serious bouts of infectious illnesses have affected pupils' attendance. While there have been recent improvements to attendance and punctuality, several pupils have had extended, unauthorised periods of absence.

Leadership and management

The quality and accuracy of the school's systems for monitoring and evaluation, combined with its track record of improvement, demonstrate a good capacity for sustained further improvement. Since the last inspection the senior leaders have worked hard to improve outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and raise pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1, in part through the use of well-chosen strategies to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy skills. Building on this stronger base, pupils' attainment at nationally expected levels and rates of progress have increased considerably across Key Stage 2.

The school's detailed and well-organised tracking system enables leaders to identify, at an early stage, groups of pupils or individuals who require extra support. They have implemented highly effective programmes that have resulted in impressive gains in attainment for individual pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils fully meet current government requirements. The governing body is in transition as the terms of office of several of its members have recently come to an end, and new

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members have yet to become fully conversant with their roles.

Leaders have improved accountability for pupils' progress and the quality of teaching through an equitable distribution of leadership responsibilities, team teaching with a coaching focus, and whole-school training on specific initiatives. The impact of new strategies is monitored carefully and weaker practice is tackled effectively. All of these arrangements are working well but some variation in the quality of teaching remains.

The curriculum is adapted well to redress weaknesses in pupils' early literacy skills and to underpin their good achievement across the school. Gaps in achievement between groups are insignificant because leaders maintain a successful focus on promoting equalities and tackling potential discrimination. It also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, as reflected in pupils' reverential responses and enthusiastic participation in assemblies and older pupils' thoughtful accounts of the lives of Victorian social reformers.

The school engages well with parents and carers in most respects, for example in supporting the progress of Nursery and Reception children through individually tailored learning packs. The newly appointed liaison officer has helped to strengthen recording systems for pupils' attendance and punctuality, but leaders acknowledge that the school's approach to these issues is not sufficiently concerted or tightly organised to consolidate and improve upon recent gains.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edward the Elder Primary School, Wednesfield WV11 3DB

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires some of you completed. Yours is a good school.

- You are taught well from Nursery to Year 6, and this helps you to reach average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. You achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- You told us you feel safe and cared for by the staff. You play your part by mixing well together and behaving sensibly.
- The school is led well. The senior leaders keep a close check on your progress and have done many useful things to improve your achievement.
- The school now provides a better education than it did when inspectors visited last time.

We have asked leaders to do the following things to help you achieve even better.

- Make sure all teachers make good use of assessment information and targets to help improve your work, particularly for those of you who can learn quickly, and give you better chances to take on leadership roles to develop your confidence.
- Work hard to improve the school's rates of attendance.
- Make sure new governors develop the skills they need to make a good contribution to the school's work.

You can help by continuing to try hard in school. Those pupils who attend less regularly should make every effort to improve their attendance.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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