

St Edmund's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124591
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	393560
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	John Mitcheson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Golding
Headteacher	Andrew Aalders-Dunthorne
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2011
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice as a special measures monitoring inspection. The inspector observed six lessons taught by three teachers and a teaching assistant. He met with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of Year 6 pupils, a group of Key Stage 1 readers and a representative from the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and also scrutinised pupils' work.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school serving a rural area. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage; very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. These pupils mainly have moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication needs. Some pupils join the school partway through their primary education. Although the numbers are small, they represent a significant percentage of particular year groups.

The school has three mixed-age classes; Reception and Year 1, Years 2 and 3, and Years 4, 5 and 6. Since 2009, the school has been in partnership with another local primary school. The schools have plans to federate by 2013. The current executive headteacher took charge of both schools at the start of 2012.

In 2011, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school was inspected in November 2011 and placed in special measures. Significant improvements were needed to the leadership and management of the school, the quality of teaching, and assessment. In March 2012, an Ofsted monitoring inspection found that it was making satisfactory progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the previous 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is not yet good because achievement in writing has not improved as much as reading or mathematics, some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and subject leadership is under-developed. However, in a short space of time, this school has improved rapidly. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection. In accordance with section 13 (4) of the education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Systematic monitoring is accelerating pupils' progress and is enabling staff to provide additional support for those who need it. Almost all Year 6 pupils attained Level 4 in English and in mathematics this year. The high standards achieved in pupils' reading and mathematics were not matched in writing.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory. No teaching is outstanding. Teaching is often good but a few inconsistencies remain. These include the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make). Lessons incorporate tasks for pupils of different ages and abilities but not all of the pupils are given enough help to plan their written work.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils help one another to stay safe and make friends. Daily assemblies promote care, courtesy and cooperation. They make a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education and create an excellent school ethos. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Clear, coherent leadership from the headteacher has given the school a renewed sense of direction. He has driven improvements to pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and assessment. There are suitable plans to maintain the pace of improvement. The governing body is well informed and provides good support and challenge for

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the headteacher. Newly-appointed assistant headteachers have increased the school's capacity to improve but subject leadership is under-developed. Literacy plans prioritise improvements in reading rather than in writing. Collaboration between partner schools has improved but plans for federation have not progressed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - broadening pupils' choice of topics to write about and using a wider range of stimuli, such as visual technology, to capture their interest and promote their creativity
 - sharing good practice between teachers to help pupils plan and add structure to their extended writing
 - prioritising the improvement of pupils' writing in the literacy development plan.

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - eradicating the inconsistencies that lead to the quality of teaching being no better than satisfactory
 - adding further consistency to the teaching of phonics
 - identifying the common features of outstanding practice and monitoring how well these features are introduced into lessons.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - increasing the involvement of all subject leaders in raising achievement
 - accelerating plans to federate with the partner primary school in order to build capacity to improve further.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Added rigour to lesson monitoring and increased scrutiny of assessment data has accelerated the rate of progress of most pupils. Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly average. They benefit from a rich learning environment, high quality care and good quality teaching and make expected progress. Children enthuse about learning and thoroughly enjoy themselves. Regular assessments indicate that most have met or exceeded expectations this year but improvements in their communication, language and literacy skills are less pronounced.

Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is lower than the previous year but, based on pupils' starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. Teacher assessments at

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the end of Year 2 show that targets have been exceeded. Attainment in reading in 2011 was high; the percentage of pupils attaining higher Level 3 was double the national average. This year, attainment in reading is broadly average, reflecting the lower ability of the class. Detailed assessment data informed by periodic pupil-progress meetings between staff and the headteacher indicate that the vast majority of pupils make expected progress between Key Stages 1 and 2. Analysis of this year's national test papers shows almost all Year 6 pupils have attained at least Level 4 in both English and mathematics. This is mainly due to the school's focus on raising achievement in mathematics where, historically, pupils have attained significantly less well than in English. Seven pupils attained higher Level 5 in reading but only one pupil did so in mathematics. Girls tend to achieve less well than boys in mathematics but this gap is closing.

Observations carried out jointly with the headteacher confirmed that, in the majority of lessons, pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils are set tasks matched to their different ages and abilities enabling all of them, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make sufficient progress. Older pupils are avid readers and talked enthusiastically about the books they have read recently. Listening to a small sample of the least-able younger readers confirmed that they are taught to read phonetically but they struggled to decode some words because they did not know basic combinations of sounds. Fewer pupils meet expectations in writing, mainly due to the significant variation in the guidance given to pupils to help them plan and structure their work. Often, after the first paragraph is written, their ideas begin to dwindle and their progress slows. The limited choice of interesting topics to write about often restricts pupils' ability to write creatively.

Quality of teaching

The inspection confirmed the school's own evaluation that the quality of teaching has improved. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, but there is an increasing proportion of teaching that is good. Intensive monitoring and professional development, provided by the local authority and other schools, have secured a number of common strengths. Teachers are using accurate assessment data to pitch work that is challenging for the most able but also meets the needs of lower-ability pupils. Pupils of similar abilities are encouraged to work together in pairs and small groups, enabling teachers to circulate and provide one-to-one support for individual pupils. These regular opportunities to work collaboratively help to motivate pupils and promote their spiritual, social moral, and cultural education. They combine well with teaching assistants to provide intensive support for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, enabling them to make similar progress to others. Every opportunity is taken to celebrate pupils' work; the quality of displays around the school is exceptional.

In the best lessons, teachers set high expectations and clear timescales to complete work, which promotes good progress. Effective group-work, higher expectations and extended periods of time to learn independently are leading to high levels of interaction, enjoyment and achievement. Pupils are encouraged to research 'wow'

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words and plan out their work to enhance their writing. Teachers plan tasks that stimulate pupils' interest. For example, in a numeracy lesson, older pupils worked enthusiastically to spend their allocated budget on a range of playground equipment. They had to calculate how much they could purchase, and measure each piece of equipment to make sure that it fitted into the playground area.

In a third of lessons, teaching is mostly satisfactory due to a lack of clear timescales, low expectations of pupils' presentation of their work and a lack of pace. Pupils' writing lacks creativity because teachers do not regularly use a range of stimuli such as video technology in lessons to capture pupils' interest. Some inconsistencies in how all staff teach phonics and basic reading skills does not enable pupils to consolidate their learning before moving to the next stage.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Throughout the inspection, pupils behaved impeccably in lessons. They worked cooperatively, showed interest in their work and enabled all lessons to proceed without interruption. Their attitudes to learning are excellent in all classes. They respect their teachers and all adults who work with them, and they make excellent contributions during teachers' questioning and group-work. They are eager to contribute in lessons and assemblies, and readily volunteer to help. They manage their own behaviour very well, so the school's procedures to manage behaviour are rarely needed. No pupils have been excluded for the past three years. No incidents of any form of bullying have been recorded and, when asked, pupils say that school is a very safe, friendly place to be. Attendance is consistently above the national average because pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and parents support the school in maintaining regular attendance. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and respect each other's views. In the playground, friendship groups play safely alongside each other and older pupils show kindness by looking after the safety and welfare of younger ones.

Leadership and management

Good leadership and management provided by the headteacher has been the catalyst for rapid improvement. His good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and prompt action to address the underperformance of pupils and staff have secured improvements to teaching and assessment, leadership and management and raised the standards achieved. His management of teaching has led to a larger proportion being of good quality.

Improvements have been secured quickly because the school has prioritised establishing rigorous, systematic procedures to accurately gauge pupils' progress and set them personal targets for improvement. Senior staff and teachers meet regularly to discuss how well each individual pupil is doing and what else needs to be done to maintain and improve their progress. Scrutiny of this data and regular monitoring of lessons are holding teachers to account for the progress made in their classrooms. Furthermore, anonymised data is shared with the governing body so they have an

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improved understanding of how well pupils are achieving. These procedures are central to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. The governing body acknowledge that accelerating plans to federate with the partner primary school would enable them to build further capacity to improve.

Other senior leaders are increasingly engaged in regular data analysis and lesson monitoring. This is building further capacity to improve. The small size of the school means that all staff are expected to adopt responsibility for at least one subject area but these roles are under-developed, including for literacy and numeracy. The literacy development plan prioritises improvements in reading more than it does in pupils' writing, which is a more pressing priority. Satisfactory leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and particularly improved use of assessment, are raising the achievement of children. A broad curriculum is enriched by an impressive enrichment programme. This adds significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. For example, all older pupils have the opportunity to play a brass instrument, travel off-site to learn and attend a residential experience.

Increased monitoring by a strengthened governing body is providing it with a better understanding of the school's effectiveness and a clearer view of its role in securing further improvements. All statutory duties, including safeguarding are met.

The views of parents were not surveyed on the inspection. However, attendance at parents' evenings and regular contact between school and the home indicate that the school enjoys the support of the large majority of them.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.

5 July 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of St Edmund's Primary School, Hoxne, IP21 5AD

Earlier this week, I visited your school to meet with you, watch you in your lessons and talk with your teachers. Thank you for welcoming me to your school. In particular, can I say a special thank you to the group of Year 6 pupils who met with me, and say a big 'well done' to the brass band who performed so well. You were all fantastic, so keep up the good work.

As you know, when your school was last inspected it was asked to make some important improvements. It has done this quickly and now provides you with a satisfactory education. You are all making much better progress and the results achieved by Year 6 pupils in this year's national tests are much higher, so well done. I found your behaviour to be wonderful. You look after each other so well and show very good manners and respect for one another. Again, well done.

I noted a few things that your school needs to do to improve even further. I have asked your teachers to:

- give you more choice of topics to write about and use things such as visual technology to stimulate your interest and creativity, and give you more help in planning your writing
- making all lessons good and often outstanding
- joining up with Mendham Primary school so that pupils and teachers do things together much more regularly.

Your headteacher is doing a good job. You can help him by letting him know your views on what else needs to be done to improve your school.

Best wishes for the future.

John Mitcheson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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