

Educare Small School

12 Cowleaze Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 6DZ

Inspection dates	18–20 June 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- Pupils make good progress across all areas of the curriculum as they move up through the school. Their learning needs are well met and they cover a broad range of subjects and topics.
- Children get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good overall. Staff know pupils well and ensure that pupils are well challenged by their learning activities.
- Pupils are well cared for by staff and the school operates in a nurturing environment. The school promotes pupils' spiritual development particularly well. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are motivated and enthusiastic learners, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school is well led and managed. School leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement since the last inspection.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills. Although pupils make good progress in writing, their skills are not as well developed as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not have as many opportunities to discuss their thinking and share their ideas together in lessons as they could do.
- Teachers do not use information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning very often. Some opportunities are missed to teach pupils how to stay safe when using new technologies and the internet.
- School improvement planning is not as sharply focused on raising pupils' achievement as it could be.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with a one-day notice period.
- The inspector observed seven lessons taught by four teachers. One of these lessons was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with two groups of pupils and listened to them read. He also looked at work in pupils' exercise books and folders.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation, including teachers' planning, records of pupils' progress, and school improvement plans. He checked the school's compliance with the regulations for independent schools.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by 18 parents and carers on Parent View and also met informally with parents and carers in the playground, as they brought their children to school. Responses on seven staff questionnaires were evaluated.

Inspection team

Jeremy Spencer, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Educare Small School is a small, non-selective independent primary school. It caters for pupils between the ages of three and 11 years. The school offers before-school care for children, from 8.00am and after-school care until 6.00pm.
- There are 47 pupils on roll, and 22 pupils attend part-time. Approximately one third of pupils have additional learning needs. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The school population reflects the ethnic diversity of the local community.
- There are three mixed-age classes: Kindergarten (Early Years Foundation Stage), Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There is flexibility between these groups, and pupils work in different groups based on their academic ability and maturity.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school at a time other than the usual starting point.
- The school aims for pupils 'to be independent learners and thinkers with an enthusiasm for learning who are able to organise their own learning effectively, make choices and interact within a stimulating and creative environment'.
- The school was last inspected in March 2010, and was judged to provide a satisfactory quality of education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length, and to practise their handwriting, presentation and spelling skills
 - ensuring that teachers build more frequent opportunities into lessons for pupils to discuss their thinking and share their learning
 - ensuring that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe when using computers and the internet, and to use ICT to enhance learning.
- Make school improvement planning more effective by establishing closer links between the actions to be taken by staff and the intended impact on raising pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Pupils' achievement is good. 'Staff spend a lot of time with my child and I'm very happy with the progress she is making here.' These were the words of a parent, to the inspector, as she dropped her daughter off at school in the morning. Other parents and carers made similar comments. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe that their child makes good progress. Inspection findings confirm that pupils make good progress at Educare Small School and achieve well.

Children begin the Kindergarten (Early Years Foundation Stage) with a highly variable range of knowledge and skills. However, their basic skills, particularly those in communication, language and literacy, are often slightly below those expected for their age. They make very good progress in the Kindergarten because the quality of teaching is outstanding. Different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who join the school at times other than in the Kindergarten, make good progress as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because the quality of teaching is good and it fully meets pupils' needs. Pupils leave the school well prepared for the next phase of their learning, often with standards slightly above those expected for their age.

Pupils' mathematical development is good. For example, older pupils are able to recall multiplication facts with speed and accuracy, and are able to confidently solve problems linked to time, decimals and fractions. Pupils read confidently and show an enjoyment and appreciation of reading. For example, older pupils were able to discuss a range of books written by their favourite authors. Pupils make good progress in developing writing skills. However, pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are sometimes lacking. This is because they do not have frequent opportunities to write at length to practise these skills. There are also some inconsistencies between the expectations of staff about pupils' spelling accuracy. Consequently, some pupils do not take enough care to spell words accurately when they are writing.

Pupils enjoy learning and are given frequent opportunities to be creative. Their art work, exhibited throughout the school, is of a high standard, and demonstrates pupils' creative flair.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe the school ensures that its pupils are well behaved. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their child is happy at school. Many parents and carers also told the inspector that the school feels like 'a big family'. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' behaviour and personal development are good. During the inspection, pupils were observed being supportive of each other and well behaved in different areas of the school, including in classrooms, in the outdoor play area and during the before-and after-school club.

Pupils develop good cultural awareness through the topics they learn about in school and through frequent school trips. The school has also successfully developed pupils' understanding of the wider world, through, for example, the sponsoring of a child in Africa. Staff ensure that information and ideas are always presented to pupils in a balanced way and from different perspectives. Pupils demonstrate good moral development through their consistently good behaviour. Pupils also form positive relationships with each other and with adults, demonstrating their development of good social skills. Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding. Frequent moments of reflection, calm, and guided movement during the day, often to music, help pupils to become very aware of themselves and of others around them, and to feel completely at ease with their surroundings.

Pupils confirm how safe they feel in school and say that bullying and negative behaviour are not issues for them. Most pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school punctually. However, a very small proportion of pupils do not attend school as frequently as they could do.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and other staff in this small school know pupils very well and have positive relationships with them. Teachers consistently ensure that pupils maintain a sharp focus on learning, in each lesson, by making it clear to them what they are expected to do and learn. Pupils respond well to this approach and it helps to ensure that they are engaged and motivated learners. Teachers ensure that pupils with additional needs are well taught and check their work frequently in lessons to make sure that they are learning well. One-to-one support with an adult, particularly to accelerate the development of their reading skills, is also successful in supporting their good overall progress.

Teachers ask very good questions during lessons to help to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. These often lead to useful and thought-provoking discussions between teachers and pupils. However, pupils do not often have the opportunity to discuss ideas between themselves. This means that on some occasions, pupils do not get the chance to explore their thinking and share their ideas, before the teacher moves on to the next stage of their learning. Pupils also miss out on opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through this paired discussion work.

The quality of teaching in the Kindergarten is outstanding. Teachers, and other adults, interact very skilfully with children and make very good use of the indoor and refurbished outdoor learning spaces. As a result, children are visibly excited by, and completely absorbed in, learning. For example, during the inspection, children were observed learning about safari trips as part of their topic work. A group of children sat excitedly together, with toy cameras, in a jeep constructed from cardboard, as they anticipated what they might encounter on their imaginary trip.

Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and write helpful comments, which serve to help pupils to identify the next steps in learning they need to take. This makes a positive impact on the good progress that pupils make. Teachers also check pupils' work frequently in lessons, providing extra help, or additional challenge, when it is necessary.

Teachers ensure that pupils have some opportunities to use computers and other technologies to support their learning. However, resources are limited and pupils do not use computers often enough. Sometimes they engage in activities on computers that are not well matched to their abilities.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum is good overall, and, as a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. Teachers' planning is detailed and well considered. They ensure that the breadth of pupils' learning is not restricted by the school's limited outdoor space, by making frequent visits to local parks and outdoor spaces. A broad range of other school trips successfully enhance pupils' learning and build up their understanding of the wider world. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their trips to Chessington Zoo, Kew Gardens and the local church. Visitors to the school also help to develop pupils' understanding of the wider world, and their awareness of public institutions. For example, photographs on display in the Kindergarten celebrate a recent visit to the school from a police officer.

A number of improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection. For example, philosophy and thinking skills sessions have been added for older pupils. Furthermore, all pupils now participate in a programme which enables them to access outdoor play and learning in

a woodland environment. There have also been improvements to the curriculum for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, children in the Kindergarten class sometimes work and learn with older children, in a group called the 'Kinderflies'. They move back to work in the Kindergarten during the afternoons to ensure that they receive a good balance of learning activities. All of these developments underpin pupils' improved achievement since the time of the last inspection. Despite these improvements, pupils still do not have enough opportunities to write at length to practise their writing skills.

Although pupils have a basic, age-appropriate understanding of the potential dangers of new technologies, they do not have a well-developed understanding. This is because there are currently too few opportunities for them to learn about e-safety in the curriculum.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Good

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. All of the regulations for this standard are met. The close and caring relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils always have someone to talk to if they have any concerns. Parents and carers believe that their children are well cared for, and all parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their child is well looked after at the school.

The procedures for checking the suitability of staff to work with pupils at the school are robust and effective. This includes the checking of staff who have been employed in other countries. All checks are clearly recorded, as required, on a single central register. The school has a full set of welfare policies, which are checked on an annual basis, including those for child protection, health and safety, behaviour and anti-bullying. Staff adhere to the policies and are suitably trained, including in safeguarding pupils. Several staff are trained in first aid, including paediatric first aid, and the policy meets requirements.

Suitable risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis, to cover on- and off-site activities. Fire drills take place on a termly basis and are fully documented. All the necessary fire risk assessments and maintenance are carried out on a regular basis and electrical appliances are regularly checked by appropriately qualified personnel.

Leadership and management

Good

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have ensured that all of the issues outlined during the last inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, and through improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum, pupils' achievement has also improved. Parents and carers have full confidence in the school's leaders. All parents/carers who responded to Parent View believe that the school is well led and managed and responds well to any concerns that are raised.

The school is successful in meeting its aims. The headteacher has a very clear vision about how the school should operate and is successful in communicating her vision to others. As a result, staff morale is high. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage does an excellent job, and works well in partnership with other schools, and the local authority, to ensure that her leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective. Senior leaders understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and have devised a suitable action plan to tackle the school's main improvement priorities. However, the plans do not always make it clear enough how, and by how much, the actions to be taken are expected to raise pupils' achievement. This makes it difficult for leaders to measure the impact of some of their actions on improving the school.

School leaders have successfully ensured that the independent school standards have been fully

met, through the application of appropriate policies and procedures. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View would recommend the school to others. The school premises are well maintained and provide a suitable environment to support pupils' learning and well-being. All the required information for current and prospective parents and carers is readily available. School leaders and teachers communicate well with parents and carers, keeping them well informed about their children's progress. The school's complaints procedures meet all of the requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131351
Inspection number	420203
DfE registration number	314/6070

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Primary
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	3–11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Number of part time pupils	22
Proprietor	Educare Small School Trust
Chair	Dr Janice Gravett
Headteacher	Mrs E Steintal
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,620
Telephone number	020 8547 0144
Email address	educaresmall@btconnect.com

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