

East Claydon School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110224
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337452
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katrine Brown
Headteacher	Barry Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. The inspector visited nine lessons or parts of lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information and safeguarding policies, and samples of pupils' work. He analysed questionnaires from staff, as well as 27 questionnaires returned by parents of children in the school or pre-school.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well provision meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, including the impact of links with the pre-school
- how well more able pupils are challenged, especially in writing
- how effectively leaders at all levels monitor the work of the school to provide challenge and drive improvement
- how much pupils enjoy school and how well they learn about life beyond East Claydon.

Information about the school

Most pupils come to this very small rural school from outside the local village through parental choice. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There are three year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage; they work together or separately at different times during the day. The headteacher, who is the only full-time teacher in the school, took up post in September 2008 after a two-year period when there was no permanent headteacher. In April 2009, the governing body took over management of the pre-school, which shares the school site. This was the pre-school's first inspection under these arrangements.

The school won an Activemark in 2008 for its work in physical education.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good school has improved significantly since the last inspection. Inspirational leadership from the headteacher has transformed the school into one where pupils flourish both socially and academically. The school is particularly successful at helping pupils to develop a love of learning. Leaders have forged a very strong partnership with parents who are unanimously delighted with the school's work. A parent accurately captured the essence of the school when commenting that 'the enthusiastic and positive approach of the headteacher and the very dedicated staff team has helped to create an exciting and stimulating learning environment'.

Pupils' achievement is good, with the best progress being made in Years 1 and 2, where teaching is good and the needs of all, including the more able, are met well.

Consequently, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is consistently above average. A comparative weakness in writing has been tackled successfully in the last year. It has improved because teachers have high expectations of what more able pupils should achieve and they plan activities that make writing purposeful. For example, pupils enthusiastically write instructions for designing a bird feeder because they know that they will eventually make one. In Years 1 and 2, the teachers' infectious enthusiasm is greatly appreciated by pupils who find 'learning fun'. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils, especially to those who need extra help.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been significantly enhanced in the last two terms by the very strong links that have been established with the pre-school.

Provision for children in the pre-school is good and managers ensure that it fully complies with its conditions of registration; it is well managed and extends the work of the main school very successfully. In the pre-school, children are given good support and close account is taken of the needs of the differing ages within the setting and the under-threes are involved fully. A strong focus on developing social skills means that children are extremely well prepared for their move into the Reception Year. In the Reception Year, children make satisfactory progress and are well cared for. They have increasingly good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning but there is not always enough challenge for the more able and learning is not always moved on quickly when children are working independently.

Pupils greatly enjoy school, especially the wide range of activities provided outside lessons to enrich the good curriculum. Members of staff work very hard to provide pupils with a breadth of experiences that prepare them well for the next stage of their education and, eventually, for later life. Throughout the school, relationships between classmates and adults are superb, with everyone helping each other when needed. There is a delightful atmosphere in lessons because pupils are well behaved and try

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their best. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and, when given the opportunity to do so, they do this well. For example, they contributed immensely to the planning, designing and building of the superb environment outside classroom. However, pupils have a limited voice in the running of the school and leaders have rightly identified the need to resurrect very worthwhile projects, such as the school council and the play-leader scheme, to strengthen this further.

The school is successful and has improved considerably because the headteacher has created an ethos in which all members of staff and pupils are valued and respected. Teamwork among staff and governors is strong and they complement each other's skills well. Together, they have a clear picture of what still needs improving based on good self-evaluation procedures. They are driving the school forward by rigorously examining what is going well and what needs improving. The school's good capacity for further improvement is demonstrated in the rise in standards in writing and the vigorous way in which leaders are working to good effect to develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in the Reception Year to the same good levels as in the rest of the school by
 - ensuring that the most able children are consistently being challenged in lessons and in free-choice activities
 - improving the quality of adult interventions when children are working independently so that learning is moved on more quickly (by December 2010).
- Give pupils a greater voice in the life of the school by ensuring that projects, such as the school council and the play-leaders scheme, are maintained from year to year (by January 2010).

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good and their thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their high rates of attendance. Pupils make good progress in lessons in Years 1 and 2; they are hard working and have very positive attitudes towards learning. This means that little time is wasted in lessons and new skills are acquired quickly. In a literacy lesson, pupils made rapid progress in learning about writing instructions because the activity was made purposeful by being linked closely to pupils' plans to develop further the outdoor area. In a mathematics lessons, pupils improved their knowledge of data handling as they prepared block graphs to show methods of travel on family holidays. In lessons where pupils learn letter sounds, an exciting range of activities, which include actions and singing, ensure good progress is made.

The above-average attainment seen in national assessments at the end of Year 2 is also evident in pupils' current work. Handwriting continues to be an area of comparative weakness, with letter formation not always accurate at the start of Year 1. There are

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only a small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and they make good progress.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn to take very good care of each other. They behave very sensibly, although just occasionally they get a little overexcited when there are lots of things going on at once. Talks from parents help pupils to appreciate that not everyone has the same beliefs. Pupils participate enthusiastically in community events; they speak very positively about the school's centenary celebrations that involved both villagers and pupils. Pupils are happy to take responsibility when given it, although they have a limited voice in the life of the school.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. They make very sensible choices about what they are going to eat and participate very enthusiastically in outdoor activities. Pupils talk very knowledgeably about the dangers they may face in everyday life; for example, they are very clear about how to stay safe on Bonfire Night.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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

How effective is the provision?

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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Pupils are supported well both academically and socially throughout the school day. There is a very happy working atmosphere in school; adults get on very well with pupils and work hard to make learning exciting. Pupils do well in Years 1 and 2 because teaching is generally pitched at the right level for all pupils and provides good challenge. Teachers use the assessment information on pupils' learning sharply, especially in English and mathematics, to plan what to teach next. In topic work, there are occasions when pupils complete the same worksheet whatever their ability and, when this happens, the work is either too hard or too easy for some. Teachers help pupils to understand how they can improve their work, often writing helpful comments in their books to identify what could be improved. They are also beginning to set challenging targets for pupils to aim at, although these are not always well understood by all.

Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported in both the main school and the pre-school. All are treated as part of the 'school family' and are given high-quality support when they need it. Pupils feel safe and know what to do if they have a worry; as one said, 'Teachers are kind and help us when we are stuck.' The school works closely with outside agencies to find additional help when it is needed.

The curriculum takes good account of pupils' interests. Increasingly strong use is being made of the local community to support learning. For example, ex-pupils recently visited school to talk about life in the past. Basic skills are promoted well, although there are still some missed opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills by using them in topic work. There is very good enrichment of the curriculum. Although this is a small school, there is an exciting range of visits and visitors; for example, pupils learn about the world of work and the importance of writing through links with a local newspaper and visits to a nearby construction site.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is strongly committed to ensuring that the many recent improvements are maintained and built upon. These ambitions and the strong drive for improvement are already firmly embedded, with governors providing good challenge and support to the headteacher. They are aware of the need to monitor the work/life balance of the headteacher to check that he does not take on too much as the only full-time member of staff. Together, leaders at all levels monitor the work of the school effectively and they are providing increasingly strong challenge to drive improvement. Subject leaders

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are becoming increasingly involved in steering developments, especially in English. Systems for evaluating school effectiveness have been strengthened in the last year. The headteacher has introduced good systems for tracking pupils' learning over time so that any who are in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and supported.

The school engages very well with parents and promotes equality successfully. Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in school events. There is no discrimination because pupils learn to respect each other's views. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good and pupils develop a good understanding of life beyond East Claydon. There are close links with the local community and pupils are learning more about life in other countries through the journeys undertaken by 'Claydon Bear' and the newly established link with a school in Johannesburg. Leaders have recently audited provision in this area and are strengthening it further by exploring how they can give pupils more opportunities to meet with others from different backgrounds. There are good safeguarding procedures. Staff are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that pupils may encounter. Leaders are rightly updating all of the school's safeguarding policies so that they reflect current practice.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving quickly as good practice is shared between staff in the Reception Year and the pre-school. The headteacher has effectively led a strong focus on improving children's progress in the Reception Year. Strategies such as support from local authority advisers and visits to other settings are

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having a positive effect and children are already beginning to learn more quickly than in the past. There is a good understanding of what remains to be done, including ensuring that assessments are always accurate enough.

Children's attainment on starting school varies significantly from year to year because groups are very small. In 2008, most children were working at the levels expected for their age when they started school. They made satisfactory progress and attainment remained broadly average by the start of the Year 1. Progress in lessons in the current year is also satisfactory. The school has strengthened links between the Reception class and the pre-school since taking over management of the latter in April 2009. This has had a very positive impact. Children from the two settings work together for much of each morning and they are enthusiastic about their learning. There is a purposeful buzz in lessons as children go happily about their work, supporting each other well. Reading skills improve particularly quickly because all children read individually to an adult on most days. Adults in the Reception Year are becoming more skilled at meeting differing needs, although there are still occasions when there is not enough challenge for the most able. Adults provide good-quality care to children, who settle quickly in the pre-school; calm and sensitive support in the Reception Year ensures that the move into the main school is happy.

Sessions are well resourced and the curriculum in the Reception Year is showing an increasingly strong balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning. This is having a positive effect on children's personal development as they have more opportunities to work in groups or independently. Learning at these times is most effective when adults intervene at exactly the right time to move learning on. At the moment, this is stronger with children in the pre-school than the Reception Year.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are unanimously delighted with the school and recent developments. Their views are typically summed up in comments such as 'My child is always so proud to tell people that she goes to East Claydon School' and 'Since September 2008 the school has become a really fun place to come and to learn.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at East Claydon 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 inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school and pre-school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	96	1	4	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	93	2	7	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	82	5	18	0	0	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)	18	68	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	78	5	19	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	74	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	100	0	0	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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 pupil's 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.



7 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of East Claydon School, MK18 2LS

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and for showing me your work. You were very polite and friendly and I enjoyed talking to you. I agree with you that your school is good and that there are lots of fun things to do every day.

Some of the things I found out about your school:

- Children in the pre-school settle very quickly and learn lots of new things. When they move into the Reception Year progress is satisfactory.
- In Years 1 and 2, good teaching helps you to make good progress.
- You really enjoy school because adults make learning exciting by planning many fun activities both in and out of lessons. I loved the 'Round House' you helped to design; it must be a wonderful place to work!
- You behave well and are very clear about how to stay healthy.
- Your teachers and other adults are extremely kind and caring and they give you good help when you are struggling with your work.
- The school and pre-school are well led and managed and all the adults are working very hard to make the school even better. The headteacher has made a big difference to the school and it is great that you say you are pleased with what he has done.
- All of your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What I have asked your school to do now:

- help you to do better in the Reception Year by making sure that adults always challenge those of you who are able to learn new things quickly and use questioning more effectively to move learning on when you are working independently
- give you more opportunities to contribute to school life through activities such as the school council and by being play leaders.

I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. You can help your teachers by continuing to be enthusiastic and by always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead Inspector

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