

Inspection of a good school: Edward the Elder Primary School

Moathouse Lane East, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 3DB

Inspection dates: 18–19 September 2019

Outcome

Edward the Elder Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

In pupils' own words, 'We get a good education and make lots of friends.' This was clear during the inspection. Pupils work and play together happily and achieve well. Their behaviour is good in class and at breaktimes. This is because the behaviour code is clear and understood by everyone. Midday supervisors play games with pupils at lunchtimes because relationships are positive. Incidents of bullying are rare but dealt with firmly if they occur.

Assemblies and different lessons share important messages with pupils about keeping safe. Visitors, such as firefighters and the crossing patrol attendant, also teach pupils about daily safety. Teachers regularly remind pupils about online safety. Eye-catching displays around the school celebrate pupils' work and show the range of subjects pupils study. Photographs of events also show how much fun pupils have, such as on 'Mad hair day'.

Leaders and staff work closely with other schools in the academy trust. Joint residential visits are planned for pupils so that they make even more friends. The working relationship between the schools is very strong. Leaders and staff want pupils to achieve well. Most do. However, expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need to be higher.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have reviewed the planning of different subjects to help pupils achieve even better results. Some subjects are taught as individual subjects such as Spanish and science. Teachers use a topic approach to cover other subjects, like history and computing. Tasks set in topic work encourage pupils to link and apply skills learned. For example, in their space topic, Year 5 pupils measured shadows at different times of the day. They then created line graphs of their results. This developed their mathematical and science skills simultaneously.

Pupils have stronger knowledge in some subjects than others. For example, key stage 2 pupils are unsure about different world religions. They also know little about well-known artists. In contrast, their geography knowledge is good. Leaders regularly check how well pupils achieve in English and mathematics. They do not assess other subjects to check how well pupils are doing.

Children settle quickly in the early years because staff are attentive and caring. Staff involve parents in their child's learning from the outset. 'Sharing journals' contain photographs of children's experiences at home and school. Staff also send home 'gift packs' in the initial weeks for nursery children. These contain early learning activities for children to practise with parents. Regular songs, rhymes and stories help develop children's language skills. Well-planned outdoor activities aid children's physical development.

Early reading starts as soon as children join the school. No time is lost. Nursery children learn early letter sounds every day. Reading books match pupils' abilities. Teachers expect pupils in all year groups to read daily. Older pupils complete reading journals when they have read a book. Story time and visits to the school library help pupils develop a love of reading. However, the weakest readers are not heard read often enough by staff. This does not help these pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils particularly enjoy mathematics because they say that it challenges them. This is because the curriculum is planned well. Teachers regularly set pupils problems and ask them to explain their answers. Tasks are matched to pupils' different abilities. This helps all groups achieve well. Results in 2019 show that pupils in Year 6 were above the national average in mathematics.

Leaders focused on improving science last year. They have continued this focus this year. Pupils carry out regular investigations and experiments. Most lessons have a practical emphasis. Pupils' science vocabulary is extended well. Pupils enjoy working in groups. They set out their ideas and findings in newly introduced 'floor books'.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of activities and events that add to school life. Trips, visitors, clubs and special events all add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils act responsibly and often raise money for charity. They show mutual respect to adults and each other. They know the difference between right and wrong.

Pupils with SEND receive extra adult help. Individual plans and targets are created for pupils to work on. However, leaders have not checked these for some time. Occasionally the same target appears repeatedly. This means that it is not suitable or pupils have not been taught the right skills to meet it.

Staff morale and team spirit is high. Leaders have reduced how much planning and assessment teachers do. This helps teachers' work-life balance. Staff feel that their workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff and governors are fully trained in safeguarding procedures. Staff receive regular updates and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns about pupils' safety promptly. Where concerns are more serious, the safeguarding leader contacts the appropriate authorities. All referrals are recorded thoroughly. Extra support is provided for pupils and families who need help. Leaders carry out checks to make sure all adults working in school are suitable. Risk assessments are in place to identify potential hazards, both in and out of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not sufficiently sequenced and coherent. The breadth of the national curriculum is not covered in all subjects. It is stronger in mathematics and PE. Leaders need to make sure that the curriculum is planned so that teachers can build pupils' knowledge sequentially, over time, allowing them to learn more and remember more. The curriculum should reflect the expectations set out in the national curriculum.
- Leaders have not developed the assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics. This means that teachers do not identify where pupils need additional support. Currently, teachers date when a particular skill has been taught in some subjects, for example science. This is a checklist. It does not identify where pupils are achieving well or where pupils are struggling.
- Records checked show that some lower-ability pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, only read once or twice a week in school. Gaps are already evident in pupils' reading abilities in Year 1 and pupils are not making the progress they should. This means that they are already falling behind and not on track to reach the standards expected by the end of Year 1.
- Leaders and staff set targets for SEND pupils based on their individual difficulties. However, these are only reviewed once a term. As a result, staff do not know if pupils achieve them sooner, and need different targets setting, or if the target is too difficult. Records checked show that some targets are repeated over several years. Sometimes these targets have been ticked as previously met. This means the targets have been unsuitable or that pupils have not been supported well enough to master the areas of difficulty identified.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Edward the Elder Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143813
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10111728
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mr Len Kruczek
Head of School	Mrs Bridget Highman
Website	www.edwardtheelder.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Edward the Elder joined Elston Hall Multi-Academy Trust in December 2016. It works in close collaboration with three other schools in the trust.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2019 but has worked for the trust for a number of years.
- Before- and after-school clubs are available for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the head of school and two assistant headteachers at the start of the inspection. She carried out lesson visits with subject leaders for reading, mathematics and science. Meetings were also held with the leader for special educational needs. The inspector also met with four members of the local governing body and two representatives from the academy trust board.
- In agreement with the head of school, reading, mathematics and science were chosen to be scrutinised in depth. The inspector met with teachers and pupils from the lessons visited. Pupils' work was also looked at and discussed.
- Safeguarding checks were carried out. These included looking at the school's central register of adults working in the school to ensure that they are suitable to work with

children. Policies, procedures and records were also checked with the school's safeguarding officer. Different staff were spoken to check their knowledge and understanding of what steps they would take if they had a concern about a pupil.

- The inspector spoke to a group of pupils to collect their views about school. School behaviour records were checked, together with information about exclusions. Attendance figures and procedures for following up absence were examined.
- Parent, pupil and staff views were collected via the Ofsted surveys and through talking to individuals and small groups. There were 16 parent responses, 14 staff responses and 37 pupil responses to Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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