

Edwards Hall Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134861
Local Authority	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA
Inspection number	294189
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	438
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Archer
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Wells
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Macmurdo Road Leigh-on-Sea Essex SS9 5AQ
Telephone number	01702 524470
Fax number	01702 512993

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2007
Inspection number	294189

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school was formed just under two years ago following the amalgamation of two schools, an infant and junior, on the same site. Hence, this is the school's first Ofsted inspection. The vast majority of pupils live locally. The proportion eligible for a free school meal is below average. Attainment on entry is broadly average with some children arriving with poor communication and social skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average though the number with a statement of special need is a little above. Only a small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils have English as an additional language but none is at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and improving. Despite the upheavals of amalgamation and recent building works, the school ensures that pupils receive a satisfactory education. This is due to the good leadership provided by the headteacher. She has led staff through a period of considerable change and managed this well. As a result, staff are working effectively together towards clear and well defined priorities. Standards are broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The drop in Year 6 performance last year has been reversed and current Year 6 pupils are on line to achieve satisfactory standards given their prior attainment and capabilities. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are also satisfactory. Teaching and learning, including in the Foundation Stage, are satisfactory overall. Whilst there are good features in teaching, the quality of planning is inconsistent and lessons are not planned sufficiently rigorously to take individual needs into account. As a result, not all pupils make as much progress as they could. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are beginning to make good progress due to recent improvements in the support they receive. Higher attaining pupils are often not sufficiently challenged and this inhibits the progress they make.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets pupils' personal development needs well. Hence, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and participate enthusiastically in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Attendance and behaviour are good. Pupils know about healthy eating and take regular exercise. An active school council and links with other schools enable pupils to contribute well to the school and wider community. Given pupils' standards and progress in literacy and numeracy, they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in education. Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and looked after and, therefore, feel safe. Support for pupils' personal development is good. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of their assessments to help pupils take the next steps in improving their learning. In particular, marking is not rigorous enough and pupils are not aware of what they need to do to make their work better.

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by her deputies and has set a clear direction for improvement based on accurate and perceptive analysis of the school's work. Middle managers carry out their roles satisfactorily and are developing these well due to the support given by the strong senior management team. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the school's work, such as in planning and assessment. These are a result of bringing together two different institutions with differing practices. Nonetheless, the capacity to improve is good based on the accuracy of the school's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and the success it has had in improving, for example, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and for boys. Governors provide a satisfactory oversight of the school's work. They have come a long way since the amalgamation in terms of understanding their roles and creating robust committee structures to manage their work effectively. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable higher attaining pupils to achieve better by improving provision for them.
- Improve the consistency and quality of lesson planning so that it meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Improve the use of assessment and marking so that these help pupils to improve their work.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average by the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain above average standards. This is in line with the standards they reached at the end of Year 2, hence signalling satisfactory progress. Standards across most of the rest of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory across the school including in the Foundation Stage. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as others.

The 2006 results in National Curriculum tests for Years 2 and 6 were average. The Year 6 results were disappointing given that pupils had begun Key Stage 2 with above average attainment. Boys did particularly badly as did pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has improved its provision to address this and boys are now achieving satisfactorily. Those with learning difficulties are beginning to make good progress. Their long term achievement is not better because the improvements have not been in place long enough. Tasks in lessons are not always pitched at the right level for different groups and all are affected by this, particularly the most able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and work and play well together. They accept responsibilities with serious enthusiasm and genuinely want to help others, for example as peer mentors and play leaders. The school council is an active and valued force and pupils know their views count. Behaviour is good although when pupils are not well engaged by interesting and lively lessons, they can become a little distracted. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly and fairly and there has been only one temporary exclusion. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They understand that what they do affects others and have a good awareness of different values, faiths and cultures in the world. Quiet moments are encouraged in the school day for periods of calm to allow pupils to explore their own inner thoughts. This they do perceptively and with maturity. In lessons and through their own fund-raising for charities, pupils are developing sound economic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and lessons are well organised, with effective management of both pupils and activities. Explanations and instructions are clear, and teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards. Good relationships between adults and pupils are a particularly strong feature of teaching. As a result, pupils are well behaved and cooperative. Good support is provided to those with learning difficulties and disabilities from both teachers and teaching assistants. This enables them to make at least satisfactory progress in lessons.

The school has a wide range of assessment procedures, and the progress that pupils make is regularly checked. However, the information from assessment is not used well enough in planning to provide pupils with work that is suited to their different needs. Teachers provide help and advice to pupils about improving their work in class. However, written comments in pupils' books are often not informative enough about the next steps pupils need to take in order to make their work better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths, such as provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, a significant proportion of whom are boys. Less well developed are arrangements to provide suitably challenging work for able pupils to stimulate their interest and promote better progress. In the Foundation Stage, sound development of children's communication and social skills lays a firm foundation for their future learning. The annual Friday Father's afternoon has successfully given fathers the confidence to attend other school functions and has helped boys to become more positive about their school work. Links across the curriculum, especially in literacy, are a school priority which teachers are developing with increasing skill but are not yet fully in place. Sound links have been fostered with the community, including local schools, and transfer arrangements to secondary education are well planned. The curriculum is enriched by a valuable range of visits and visitors as well as school clubs which are well attended and contribute well to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's care, guidance and support for its pupils are satisfactory overall. However, adults ensure that there is good pastoral care. For example, pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be distressed or anxious. Outside agencies are used well to support pupils when a need is identified. There is good partnership with parents who are very supportive and positive about the school.

Staff ensure that pupils work in a safe, secure and clean environment. Safety checks and risk assessments are routinely carried out, although one health and safety issue was drawn to the attention of governors during the inspection. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy living, and they are regularly reminded of the need to take care, for instance when doing physical education.

Pupils have targets for improving their work in literacy and numeracy. However, these vary in quality, and discussions with pupils suggest that they are not clear enough about how to make their work better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership of the school has done much to enable the school to evolve from two separate and distinct schools to arrive at a point where staff are working as a team to achieve common goals. This is down to the good leadership of the headteacher. Her monitoring and evaluation have been key to identifying the right issues for improvement. She has created a strong senior

management team which is working proactively to bring about improvement. Subject leaders and other managers have had sound opportunities and good support to help them monitor their areas of work. The school is continuing to develop their effectiveness especially in relation to driving improvements in planning and assessment.

Good systems are in place for tracking pupils' progress at whole school level and identifying, on a termly basis, individuals who are underachieving. Appropriate support is then provided to help them to catch up. Governors are beginning to ask challenging questions about the school's work. They are now in a good position both to support and drive future developments.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edwards Hall Primary School, Leigh-on-sea, SS9 5AQ

We enjoyed our time at your school very much and we particularly liked visiting your classrooms and talking to you. We would like to thank you very much for making us feel welcome.

The school is providing you with a satisfactory education. We saw a number of things that were good including ways in which you help to make the school a better place:

- You get on well with one another and your attendance and behaviour are good.
- You become mature and confident by the time you are in Year 6.
- Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support in and out of lessons.
- You are well cared for and looked after and, as a result, you feel safe and happy at school.
- Your headteacher leads the school well.

There are some things that could be better. These include:

- Developing a challenging and interesting work programme for able pupils.
- Ensuring that lessons are well planned and focused on your individual needs so that you get work that is at the right level for you.
- Providing you with targets and written comments that tell you clearly and precisely what you need to do to improve your work.

You can certainly help to improve the school by continuing to work hard and asking your teachers to tell you how to make your work better.

We wish you all well in the future.

Gulshan Kayembe Lead inspector