

Ewyas Harold Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116674
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	295403
Inspection date	8 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Knight

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	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Palmer
Headteacher	Stephanie Rosser
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2000
School address	Ewyas Harold Hereford HR2 0EY
Telephone number	01981 240432
Fax number	01981 241106

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves the village and rural surrounding area of Ewyas Harold, near Hereford. All pupils are White British. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average, although no pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school was without a headteacher for a considerable time, including the time of the previous inspection. The present headteacher took up post in September 2006. Children join the Reception class with a range of knowledge and skills; overall their standards on entry are in line with expectations.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I have always felt that this school has the best interests of the children at heart. The teachers are extremely dedicated and well supported by the teaching assistants.' This was a typical response from parents, echoing the inspection team's findings about this good and rapidly improving school.

The school has a positive ethos, which is subscribed to by staff, parents and pupils alike. The good pastoral care is now complemented by improved academic guidance. Pupils and parents know and understand how well they are doing and how their targets will help them improve. As a result, the school's care, guidance and support have improved and are now good. Parents praised the school's improved communication with them and this is an outcome of concerted efforts to place the school at the heart of village life. As a result, pupils' contribution to the community as a whole, as well as to the school community, is good. An air of mutual respect underpins the good attitudes and behaviour of pupils, whose evident enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. 'Learning is interesting,' they said. The good curriculum is enhanced by an emphasis on creativity and citizenship which promotes both the good achievement in the school and pupils' good personal development. The school council is helping pupils to mature and grow into good citizens through its unrelenting focus on issues that affect the school, the local community and those that are global in their scope. Teaching continues to improve and is good. Children in Reception enjoy good provision and make good progress. Pupils in the rest of the school, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve well and standards in Year 6 are well above average. Factors promoting this good achievement include the good use of teaching assistants to support pupils in need of a little extra help and focused questioning that matches the needs of all pupils closely. However, some variations in teaching quality remain. The most capable pupils are not always fully challenged and lessons occasionally lack pace.

How has the school improved so much in so short a time? At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics were too low and the school did not know itself well enough because monitoring procedures lacked rigour. Provision and teaching in mathematics were already improving. The pace of improvement quickened, supported by the local authority, and standards and achievement were much better in the summer. Good leadership and management were cemented by the appointment of a substantive headteacher from September. Systems were made more rigorous and good monitoring and evaluation mean that the school now knows itself well and has set in motion precisely targeted actions to maintain improvement. A sense of shared purpose is tangible. All staff share in leadership, taking responsibility for curricular areas and targets in the sound school improvement plan. This, considered alongside the rapid improvement already gained, shows the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement because leadership and management have improved and are now good and achievement in the school has rapidly improved to a good level over the last year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the good practice already in the school to bring all teaching up to the quality of the best.

- Raise standards by ensuring that the most capable pupils are consistently challenged in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils now achieve well throughout the school and reach standards that are above average. Good provision in Reception, with an appropriate focus on basic skills and children's personal, social and emotional development, ensures that children are well prepared when they start Year 1. Standards in mathematics declined up to 2005. Effective action led to substantial improvement in Key Stage 2 in 2006, and the school's current records suggest this improvement is likely to be maintained. School records also indicate that the gentler decline in mathematics standards in Key Stage 1 is likely to be arrested this year, with pupils making very good progress so far in Year 2. Very high standards in reading have been maintained through a continuing focus in school and in partnership with parents on this vital skill. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from focused and effective support in lessons and make the same good progress as their peers. However, although the most capable also make good progress, they are not consistently challenged beyond their comfort zone and could be doing even better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The words of the school prayer, 'Hard work, Happy play, Kind thoughts each day' encapsulate the school's positive ethos. As a result, pupils are confident, well rounded individuals with high self esteem and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils really enjoy school because of the interesting curriculum and the positive atmosphere. This is a factor in their good behaviour, although they can become restless if the pace in a lesson flags. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep safe through regular sessions, for example with the local police. They also have a clear understanding of healthy living, for example they enthusiastically undertake sporting activities. The school council is well organised and enables pupils to make a real contribution to school and the wider community. Older pupils act well as buddies to children in Reception. All know how to deal with bullying, although they agree it is not a significant problem in the school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

At the time of the previous inspection, teaching was improving and was satisfactory. Sustained efforts, supported by rigorous and focused monitoring and evaluation, have maintained this improvement and teaching and learning are now good. Teachers target questions well, ensuring that they are challenging for the individual. However, they do not always ask more probing questions that test pupils' abilities to explain their reasoning. Whilst all pupils have targets to aim for in their work, the most capable in lessons do not always have enough extension work. Occasionally, the pace can become pedestrian, leading to pupils becoming restless. Positive relationships in the school ensure that most lessons proceed at a brisk pace with pupils fully engaged. Their interest is often captured through real world contexts, as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 explored ratio in a mathematics lesson by experimenting with cement, sand, gravel and

water to make concrete, later testing the different mixtures as part of their learning in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well by teaching assistants who quietly paraphrase the teachers' words and act as an audience.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum reflects the school's emphasis on creativity alongside coverage of the basic skills. The Every Child Matters agenda is at the heart of all school planning, including the curriculum. The result is a stimulating curriculum that inspires pupils and is a significant factor in their enjoyment of school and the progress they make. In Reception, a good balance is maintained between structured activities led by adults and those chosen by children themselves. Throughout the school good provision helps pupils understand other cultures, for example through the use of toys from different countries. Problem solving skills are promoted well. In lessons, some opportunities are taken to support learning in other subjects through the use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, but these are not yet formally identified. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The high standard of pastoral care has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are confident that staff are there to help them because, as they say, 'Everybody knows everybody.' Good, well managed provision enables pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to be supported effectively and to make the same good progress as their peers. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are securely in place and well understood by all staff. Links with outside agencies are good. Academic guidance has improved significantly. All pupils now have individual targets for improvement that they know and understand. Their progress is tracked closely so that underperformance can be readily identified and action taken. An outcome is the improved progress now evident as all involved have a clearer idea of what pupils can do and how they might improve. However, the explicit use of pupils' individual targets is not always evident in planning, and this is a factor in the tasks for the most capable sometimes lacking challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The governing body has taken great strides since the previous inspection. Accepting that it has relied too much on information from the headteacher in the past, it now challenges the school much more vigorously and has set in place good independent monitoring procedures of its own. The school improvement plan clearly identifies tasks to be completed, by whom and at what cost. However, it does not consistently include sharply focused and measurable criteria by which its success can be measured. The governing body receives reports of how well the plan is progressing, and is beginning to be involved in monitoring its progress. The headteacher's clear vision for the school's development is shared by all staff and this has been a significant factor in its rapid improvement. Although self-evaluation procedures lacked rigour at the time of the last inspection, it was already taking effective action over a longstanding weakness in mathematics which resulted in a welcome improvement in standards in the 2006 National Curriculum tests for Year 6. Following a rigorous analysis of the outcomes, the weaker areas

were identified and formed the basis of a sequence of focused weeks of monitoring. This accurate monitoring of the school's work is undertaken using a variety of activities with strengths and areas for development clearly identified. Tracking of pupils' progress is now rigorous and shows that the standards and progress last year are being consolidated this year. New systems introduced after the appointment of the current headteacher ensure that problems can be nipped in the bud.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ewyas Harold Primary School, Ewyas Harold, HR2 0EY

Thank you very much for being so helpful and polite when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work and play. A special thank you is due to those members of the school council who gave up part of their lunchtime to talk to us. Your school has really improved over the last year and I'm glad to say it's now a good school.

You told us how much you enjoy school because of the interesting things you do. We agree that the teachers try to make things more interesting for you and help you learn in a fun way. But what we were really impressed with was the way everyone really cares about everyone else and how you all get on so well. This helps you to learn.

The new system that gives you all targets to aim for has started well, and all of the people we spoke to knew theirs well. We think that the teachers could use them a bit better for those of you who find work easy, so we've asked the school to look at improving that. You can help by remembering your targets in every lesson and trying to make sure you work towards them.

Most of the lessons we saw were good, but occasionally they were a little bit slow moving. The school has now got good ways of checking how well it's working, so we've asked it to use these to make sure every lesson is as good as the best. Your new headteacher and all of the staff have worked hard to make the school so much better. We think they know just what to do now to keep it good, and maybe make it even better!

I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Knight Lead Inspector