

Queen Edith Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110763
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310412
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2008
Reporting inspector	John Francis

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pam Jones
Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Peet
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2004
School address	Godwin Way Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 8QP
Telephone number	01223 712200
Fax number	01223 712201

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school with a Nursery, serving a diverse area of the city. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is twice the national average and almost three times that for pupils who have English as an additional language. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that normally expected for children of this age. However, the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities throughout the school is below average.

The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Mark and the Eco Bronze Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well academically and, with the excellent support systems in place, develop outstanding personal and social skills. Good progress since the last inspection demonstrates a good capacity for continued improvement. The leadership of the school at all levels, including governance, is good. Much of this is guided by the excellent leadership and direction provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who support and enthuse staff and pupils alike. As a result, the school has an exceptionally high level of parental support and confidence. The comment from one parent that, 'The school is great at holding together a very diverse community and encouraging children to respect and learn from each other', is typical of the many positive statements made. This strong community cohesion was a very notable feature seen during the inspection.

Standards over time have been above average at Year 2 and Year 6, as has the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels. The good start children get in Nursery and Reception and the good progress they make continues as they move through the school. Only in writing in Key Stage 2 is there any noticeable variation in the rate of progress between years and classes. While literacy is becoming embedded across the curriculum, not all teaching takes every opportunity to develop pupils' writing skills further. However, achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is not the only aspect of work the school celebrates. The high quality of music and the artwork seen throughout the school reflects a strong focus on the cultural and multicultural aspects of education. Alongside this, pupils develop good workplace skills, as seen in their skilful use of information and communication technology.

Consistently good teaching underpins the good progress pupils make. Teachers' good subject knowledge and organisational skills, allied to good planning, present pupils with many interesting opportunities and promote great enthusiasm and enjoyment of learning. Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes create a climate in which they can learn effectively and where endeavour is celebrated. A well planned curriculum creates many opportunities for pupils to experience a rich and varied range of approaches to learning. However, opportunities are missed in Reception to give children greater freedom to follow some of their own interests. With good support, through detailed planning and well-targeted work by teaching assistants, pupils who have specific learning needs or who are at the early stages of learning English, achieve well.

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and all the necessary checks are in place to ensure they are safe and protected. Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and feel they are free from bullying or any sort of harassment. There are effective systems for checking on pupils' attendance, and, although this is average, it has improved steadily over time. The detailed analysis of data, for example, by gender and/or ethnicity, enables teachers to identify the specific needs of individuals or the diverse groups in school. This enables teachers to set accurate and challenging targets.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Through the good provision, both indoors and outdoors, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well to reach, and often exceed, the levels expected by the time they move into Year 1. The arrangements for children starting school are very good and these continue to ensure a seamless transition from Nursery into Reception and on into Year 1. With

the good systems in place, children understand what is expected of them, are well behaved, confident and open. A wide range of play-based activities balances adult-directed group work. Within these children are able to make choices and show good levels of engagement and persevere with their tasks. Where organisation is less effective, there are not enough opportunities for children to follow their own interests and make some decisions for themselves about the topics they would like to explore. The current system means they can only work within the limited choices provided by the adults.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring consistent progress through Key Stage 2 and using all opportunities to develop writing across the curriculum.
- Ensure that planning in the Foundation Stage includes more learning opportunities that arise from children's own interests and experiences.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From the time they enter the Nursery, children make good progress to reach, and for many, exceed the expected standards by the time they leave Reception. This progress continues as they go through school and, by the end of Year 6, test results generally, have been consistently above average for many years in English, mathematics and science. The school's own pupil progress tracking shows that this is likely to be the situation for the 2008 national tests. Achievement is good and pupils are in line to reach their challenging targets. At Year 2, this is a similar picture, with pupils progressing well to achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The only area where there is more variability is pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2, where this is more erratic year-on-year and between classes. A detailed analysis of assessment results enables the school to make very good provision for pupils who have specific learning or linguistic needs. This enables them to make the same rate of progress as others in the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reflects the high level of respect seen among pupils, leading to excellent community cohesion. The beliefs and cultures of the many different groups in school are recognised and celebrated, something parents comment about very positively. These are reflected in the excellent behaviour and relationships found throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding ability to work and play together; they cooperate very well in class and in the playground. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of keeping safe and they are confident in the knowledge that if they are experiencing any problems there is always someone to whom they can turn. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy, but as a 'Healthy School', some of their choices do not reflect the healthy eating messages taught. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and the school council enables them to take an active part in the democratic process. However, this is not open to the youngest children in school and the organisation of the council limits its independence and the opportunities it has to manage its own meetings. With the good progress they make, the above average standards they reach, including ICT, and their outstanding social development, pupils have an excellent preparation for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Within this overall picture of good teaching, there are examples of some outstanding lessons that take pupils' learning well beyond that normally seen. This is often due to the excellent subject knowledge and understanding shown by those teachers that enables them to generate great enthusiasm in the pupils. In all classes, detailed lesson planning and collaboration between teachers is a key feature. The learning outcomes for the lesson are clearly set out and shared with the pupils. From these, pupils are often involved in assessing their own work or that of others, although this is not wholly consistent. In many lessons, teachers make effective use of technology, such as computers and the interactive whiteboards to create a high level of interest and engagement. Good pace to lessons, good teaching strategies and classroom management skills motivate pupils well. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have additional learning needs as well as skilful, direct teaching for those who are at the early stages of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is evidence of the school's broad and balanced curriculum in the wide range of high quality displays in classrooms and around the school. A good range of visits and visitors, along with the extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities enhance an already good curriculum. Parents had many positive things to say about the wide range of events held in the school. The provision for music is particularly strong. The curriculum for personal, social and health education ensures pupils develop positive attitudes and strong, supportive relationships. The development of a skills-based curriculum, alongside an effective interpretation of the revised strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, is a major feature of the work currently in progress. A modified curriculum caters well for the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language, or others with specific learning or cultural needs, to ensure they progress well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The range of support available to pupils is excellent, particularly for more vulnerable pupils or those who have personal and emotional issues. There are outstanding links with other agencies that support and complement the work of the school. The use of counsellors and learning mentors is helping those pupils who are vulnerable or in greatest need and raising their achievement. All the necessary policies and safeguards are in place to protect and care for pupils. Regular assessments and detailed analysis of these results identify what pupils need to do to move on in their learning. Additionally, the detailed marking of pupils' work, and the guidance given to them through this, enhances their learning. The expert management of the programme for pupils who have additional learning needs and for raising minority ethnic achievement is ensuring success for these pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and direction to the work of the school, supported by a knowledgeable and effective deputy headteacher. Through an accurate and detailed evaluation, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Together, they bring complementary skills, building on the strengths and addressing the weaknesses. Middle managers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and well along the way to developing good subject leadership skills. The management of the special needs provision and the support given to pupils at the early stages of learning English is exceptionally good. The governing body is well led, well informed and active in its pursuit of continuous improvement.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

30 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Queen Edith Primary School, Cambridge, CB1 8QP

Many of you will remember that Mrs Merrick, Mr Hewett and I visited your school a little while ago. Thank you for making us so welcome. It was lovely meeting you and all of you we talked with were very keen to share your work and ideas. We have tried to reflect some of those in the report. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

We agree with you that this is a good school and we can see you reach good standards in your work. We also liked all of the music in school. All of the adults take excellent care of you and work hard to make your school an interesting place to come to. All of you make a good contribution to your school. Many of you work very hard to help others and improve your school and you carry out your tasks extremely well. We enjoyed meeting those of you on the school council. You told us how much you enjoy school and how you work hard and try your best, and we can see this in the quality of your work. We agree with you that your teachers make your lessons interesting. You also told us that everyone in school gets on well and we could see this in the way you worked and played together. We were very impressed by how well all the children looked after one another, and particularly liked the way everyone took an interest in and celebrated each other's cultures.

To help you do even better we have asked the school to ensure teachers plan how to improve writing standards for those of you in Years 3 to 6 and give you more opportunities to write in different subjects. We have also asked the teachers in the Foundation Stage to give children more opportunities to choose some of their topics for themselves.

We wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard and get even better.

John Francis

Lead inspector