

Evesham, St Richard's CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116810
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	312411
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lucy Vincent-Daviss
Headteacher	John Reay
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Four Pools Lane Evesham WR11 1DU
Telephone number	01386 446416
Fax number	01386 40781

Age group	4-10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than most first schools and provides for Reception to Year 5. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Although the proportion of pupils for whom English is not the first language is below average, there are an increasing number of Polish children. The school has achieved the Eco Schools Greenflag for several years, Activemark and the Gold Artsmark award. The school has had to manage considerable staff absence during the last twelve months.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Evesham St Richard C of E First School is a satisfactory school that makes good provision for pupils' personal development and provides a rich curriculum. Senior leaders have ensured that there is a very attractive environment and a supportive ethos. Parents recognise that the school has a 'happy atmosphere' and often praise the 'very caring' nature of the school. A typical pupils' comment was, 'I like school because teachers care for you and are kind'.

Many parents say that their children are 'very happy to come to school' and this is reflected in pupils' good attendance. Pupils really enjoy school because there are lots of interesting things to do. Both parents and pupils very much appreciate the wide range of clubs, the interesting visits and visitors and the extensive creative opportunities including art, drama and music. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe and extend their knowledge and understanding through membership of the health club. There is a strong commitment to the school community and the wider community. Pupils behave well and show respect for their teachers and one another. Their dedication to caring for the environment is shown through the very valuable work of the Eco committee.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching and a wide range of interesting activities. Through the rest of the school, achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 5. Although there is some high quality teaching many lessons lack sparkle and move along slowly. There is not enough good teaching to accelerate achievement beyond satisfactory. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough and work is not always carefully matched to pupils' needs. This can result in more able pupils marking time in some lessons. The number of learning support assistants has increased since September 2007 but they are not always deployed to best effect, resulting in missed opportunities to support learning. Although the curriculum is full of exciting opportunities, pupils' achievement is satisfactory because of the uninspiring way basic skills are sometimes taught. Pupils from different backgrounds relate very well to each other. The increasing number of Polish children are settling in quickly and making satisfactory progress.

The leadership team has been strengthened and this has brought about some important improvements in the school's management procedures. School leaders now analyse data well and this has allowed them to carefully check pupils' progress and identify where teaching is less effective, but not always why. Staff are hard working and committed to improvement; however, the lack of regular monitoring of lessons is holding back advancements in the quality of teaching. Staff have not always had the information and support they need in order to fully develop their teaching skills. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory and has been enhanced by recent improvements to management and organisation. Teaching staff, governors and school leaders are determined to progress and the school is poised to move on.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Reception classes their skills are a little below average, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress, particularly in their language and creative development. Children have an enjoyable time because activities are exciting and play is combined very successfully with learning. Good care is taken of children, and parents appreciate the very good induction procedures that ensure

their children settle quickly into school. They praise the friendly and reassuring attitudes of staff. Though particularly good use is made of the small outdoor area, accommodation in the Foundation Stage is quite cramped. Staff try their very best in the circumstances but this does sometimes restrict the range of activities that can be planned.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching by improving the pace of lessons, improving the deployment of learning support assistants and ensuring that work is planned to meet the full range of pupils' needs.
- Establish regular routines for rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and share that information with staff so that they can improve their skills.

A small proportion of the 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

When pupils enter Year 1 their standards are average. Rates of progress vary from year group to year group and class to class, with those pupils who benefit from consistently good teaching making good progress and the rest making satisfactory progress. The standard of presentation of pupils' work is very variable. In Years 3 to 5, pupils make more rapid progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 5, fewer pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics than in reading and writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language progress at a similar rate to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils usually work hard in their lessons, but occasionally they lose concentration when lessons are less exciting. Pupils know how to keep safe and secure. School is a calm, orderly community where behaviour is good. Relationships are warm and supportive. Bullying is rare and parents and pupils recognise that any minor issues are very quickly resolved. There is a strong commitment to healthy eating and drinking, and good attendance at sports clubs. Pupils of all ages are keen to make a good contribution to the school community. For example, many do jobs around school and the school council and the Eco committee work hard for the good of the school and the wider community. Pupils are only satisfactorily prepared for their futures because, although they have positive attitudes, their basic literacy and numeracy skills are only satisfactory and they do not always have the opportunities to solve problems and fully develop as independent learners.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall there is some good teaching, particularly in Year 5. There are examples of lively teaching that interests pupils and some very good use of questioning to check their understanding. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and this gives pupils confidence. Good opportunities for working in groups and pairs

enhance pupils' personal development. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour but their expectations of their academic achievement, including the presentation of work, are more variable. The use of assessment information is inconsistent and teachers do not always plan for the needs of all pupils, so that too often the more able and average pupils are set the same work. There is too much lacklustre teaching which does not always enthuse pupils. In some classes, support assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning but, in others, they are underused, especially during introductions to lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has many strengths, including a very powerful creative element and very good enrichment. Provision for developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is good but limitations in the delivery of the curriculum results in pupils' achievement being satisfactory rather than good. Pupils get ample opportunities to develop their skills in art, drama, dance and music. The good attention paid to the arts is exemplified by the very high quality artwork displayed around school. Pupils enjoy the recently introduced French lessons. There is a very good range of well-attended clubs which promote enjoyment and enhance learning. Pupils appreciate the visits, which are linked to topics, and the Year 5 residential visit provides some very good opportunities for personal development. A strong focus on the environment is helping pupils to understand their obligations to the world community. Good attention is paid to extending pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and experts are used well in this area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good standards of pastoral care contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their personal development. The school is a caring community where relationships between adults and pupils are good. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure. Vulnerable pupils, including those with emotional needs, are very well supported. Parents find the staff very approachable and willing to help if problems arise. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Senior managers carefully check pupils' progress and class teachers are starting to make more effective use of the information they are provided with. Pupils are set targets which generally identify the next steps for learning, but these are sometimes not specific enough. Pupils do not routinely refer to these targets and so they are not contributing as much as they could to raising standards. Teachers' marking is improving. Many teachers give pupils clear advice about how to improve their work but few teachers refer to pupils' targets. Some marking is still perfunctory and does not help pupils to progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

School leaders, including the headteacher, have successfully created a school with an attractive environment and very pleasant ethos where pupils' personal development and well-being are given a high priority. Last year's extensive staff absences have been managed well and their impact on pupils' achievement and well-being has been minimised. The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. There are good relationships with parents, the community and other

local schools, and these are used well to support learning. Although parents are very supportive of the school, some feel that day-to-day communication could be more timely.

Governors are very supportive. Their regular contact with the school ensures that they are well informed. The school is aware of where its strengths and weaknesses lie. It is analysing its performance data well and staff are being made increasingly aware of their responsibilities regarding the need to raise standards. However, there is insufficient regular monitoring of lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. At present, the impact of target setting is merely to maintain standards at a satisfactory level rather than helping to accelerate performance. Leaders are resolute in their commitment to improvement and the future holds much promise.

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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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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**

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The team and I really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a satisfactory school that is getting better. It is clear that you have a good time at school because of all the fun things you have to do. You told us how much you liked the clubs such as the Imagineering Club, which looked very interesting indeed. You told us how much you are looking forward to your residential visit in Year 5.

We were very impressed by all your artwork, including the lovely work on Native American Indians. It was good to hear that you know lots about keeping healthy and safe, particularly through the health club. We were very impressed by your good behaviour. You have very good manners and make visitors very welcome indeed. We thought that you make a really good contribution to the school community and were very impressed by your commitment to improving the environment through the ECO committee. Well done!

You told us that your teachers look after you well and that they always try to help you. Younger children have a good time at school and are doing well because they have exciting lessons. You are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 5, and you are reaching similar standards to other pupils. We have asked your teachers to help you to make faster progress by making sure that lessons are more exciting and that you always have work to do that challenges you. We would like to see you get through more work in lessons and we have asked the school to make sure that they make the very best use of teaching assistants to help you to do well.

The managers in your school are working hard to make sure that your school gets better. We have asked them to carefully check the quality of your lessons. You can help too by trying hard to achieve your targets.

Thank you again for being such good company. I wish you well for the future.

4 October 2007



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Evesham St Richard C of E First School, Evesham, WR11 1DU

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Yours faithfully

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector