

Edith Weston Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120042
Local Authority	Rutland
Inspection number	327184
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	135
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Moore
Headteacher	Mr Tony Hitchman
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Weston Road Edith Weston Oakham Rutland LE15 8HQ
Telephone number	01780 720025
Fax number	01780 720307

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. The great majority of pupils come from a nearby military base and a small minority live in Edith Weston village and the surrounding rural area. More pupils than usual have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and cover a range of needs including behavioural, emotional, moderate and specific learning difficulties. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British, with a very small proportion from minority ethnic communities, particularly Black British or Caribbean background. Up to two-thirds of pupils arrive or leave part way through any school year. The school has Investors in People status and holds the Activemark, Eco School and International School awards. It offers Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a combined Nursery and Reception class. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age.

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. Most pupils arrive with a low level of knowledge and skills and a history of disruption to schooling when their parents' military units relocate. The school helps them settle well and recover essential learning skills. Pupils' achievement is good given their very low starting points. A few pupils stay at the school for all of their primary education and more of them reach average and above average standards.

The school succeeds because it is well led and managed and staff are effective and dedicated. A welcoming tone is set by the headteacher, coupled with high expectations of staff and pupils. Staff show good teamwork, supporting each other and the headteacher well and promoting a very consistent approach. Teaching is good and benefits from pupils' positive attitudes to school. Staff have improved assessment arrangements, which now enable rapid evaluation of pupils' strengths and weaknesses on arrival and swift action to fill gaps in knowledge or boost self-confidence and personal skills. Early Years Foundation Stage provision gives children an exceptionally good start. This positive early impact on children's education is limited because mobility is so high. Only a fraction of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have come through the school's Nursery and Reception classes.

Standards overall at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average in English and mathematics and below average in science, reflecting teaching that is good overall, with pace and challenge in lessons that motivate pupils. Lessons generally involve pupils actively and include tasks for the full ability range. A minority of teaching, while satisfactory, lacks consistency in pace, challenge and engagement, particularly for the most able. Equally, a small proportion of outstanding teaching exploits these positive features to the full, leading to pupils' exceptional progress. The quality of teaching has improved in the last 18 months as a result of more effective monitoring and support by senior staff. Standards also indicate how well 'booster' groups now rebuild the uncertain grasp of basics with which some pupils arrive. For instance, pupils with serious reading difficulties improved their reading ages by up to a full year, and in one case 27 months, after an intensive two months of specialist support.

Good academic achievement is closely linked to good personal development. Because behaviour is good and attitudes positive, teaching and support groups can focus constructively on helping pupils learn. Pupils are reflective and caring. Their willingness to work with and support others is good. Collaborative learning in lessons, for instance, is matched by a keenness to raise money for charities or link up with schools in Fiji and Germany. Pupils know how to stay safe and lead healthy lives. They enjoy school, as shown by their above average attendance and good conduct. The curriculum plays its part in sustaining good motivation. Its breadth and balance are good, and it is enhanced by an emphasis on skills and independent research and by good language and sports provision.

Good care, guidance and support promote this good personal development. Staff show great commitment to pupils, backed by good marking of work and strong and systematic monitoring of their progress, although it is not as rigorous as it could be in science and for the more able pupils. Arrangements for supporting those with learning difficulties are good. All statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The school is largely accurate in its self-evaluation and numerous recent changes demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement. Coordinators have limited scope for monitoring the teaching and progress in their subjects and the setting of whole school targets in English,

mathematics and science does not involve them as extensively as it might. Links with parents are overwhelmingly positive and the school plays a good role in promoting community cohesion, both locally and globally. It is especially good at exploiting the international links that arise from overseas postings of parents and pupils. It also responds well to the need for relocating families to settle quickly and integrate within the local community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children entering the extremely well led, organised and welcoming Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start. They and their families are valued, listened to and supported. Morning handover times go very smoothly and it is common to see parents working with their children on computers or other settling-in activities before registration. Staff make very good use of detailed information about children's personal and academic skills. Many start the Nursery with very limited competence in pre-writing, mathematical skills and social awareness. Several have great difficulty managing their own behaviour. Planning builds systematically on these starting points and, coupled with excellent teaching, promotes extremely good progress and personal development. While communication, writing and number skills are still a little below those expected nationally at the end of Reception, they have improved remarkably since entry to the Nursery. Personal and social skills, creativity and physical development are broadly typical of children nationally and again show tremendous improvement. The small minority of pupils who stay at the school and enter Year 1 do so in line with expectations for their age. Teaching and learning are excellent and largely explain this impressive progress. Lessons are characterised by the warm, encouraging manner of staff, their meticulous planning, the wide range of strategies for engaging children and a rapid pace. Although much work is done by children in a single class, Nursery and Reception groups separate for specific tasks, particularly to boost the older children's grasp of number, letters and sounds. Teaching assistants work very effectively with the teacher and contribute significantly to the excellent promotion of children's welfare.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by ensuring that all lessons adopt the strong pace, high level of challenge for the more able and active involvement of pupils seen in the best practice.
- Apply the rigorous tracking system currently used in mathematics and English to science.
- Create additional time for subject leaders to monitor and support colleagues, play a greater role in setting and meeting whole school targets and track the progress of the more able pupils more closely.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Few of those making excellent progress in Early Years Foundation Stage are still in school to take Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments and tests. While attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is satisfactory, vital preparatory work has been completed in consolidating essential reading skills and number competence which so many new arrivals lack. Reading-age scores for 'booster' groups show some pupils making a remarkable recovery and fresh gains over a period of months. Weaknesses in Key Stage 1 writing have largely been redressed. Results in Key Stage 2 indicate fewer pupils

than might be expected gain the highest grades, as a result of the inconsistent provision of challenging work for more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and a tribute to the impact of the care and guidance provided. Many pupils' personal skills and self-confidence are weak on arrival, but they strengthen rapidly. Behaviour is good and pupils show a mature attitude to each other and to adults. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all good. Pupils learn to be reflective, make responsible choices and acquire good social skills. They can work well both independently and collaboratively. The school looks beyond its gates and pupils know about and respect people from other countries and of different backgrounds. They show a strong concern for others and many contribute well to school life and to charities and communities beyond. Pupils enjoy school and their above average attendance supports this. Healthy lifestyles and personal safety are taken seriously and pupils make good use of the extensive sports provision offered. They say they feel safe and know that any bullying, while very rare, is dealt with effectively. Preparation for the next stage of education is satisfactory, reflecting the standards achieved in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons benefit from the positive attitude of learners and good relationships between pupils and staff. Some excellent practice is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good lessons predominate and ensure that progress in lessons is good overall. In good lessons, activities move swiftly from one interesting task to another, with challenging work for the full range of pupils at all stages. Pupils frequently come to the front to demonstrate skills or share their findings. They work well with partners for extended periods. When practice is excellent, the level of concentration is exemplary and stems from the teachers' encouraging manner, detailed planning of work for all abilities and skill at involving pupils fully. A minority of lessons is satisfactory because of a lack of challenge, pace and engagement, particularly for the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum stimulates and interests pupils well. Formal lessons and extra-curricular activities offer good breadth and variety. The recent decision to adopt an International Primary Curriculum has ensured that all topics focus on skill development, independent research and integration between subjects. Sports provision is especially well developed, with the school serving its own pupils well and acting as a regional focus for other schools. In addition to more conventional provision, orienteering, trampolining and other specialist sports flourish. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good while that for the more able is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff provide excellent pastoral care. They go out of their way to ensure that pupils feel safe, make good choices about healthy living and contribute to others. Good systems for behaviour management and rewards are used consistently. Good use is made of support staff and external services to give pupils one-to-one help with personal, social or learning issues. Arrangements to promote attendance work well. Safeguarding, child protection and all other statutory requirements are met. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

The tracking of academic progress is now good. Some aspects of the system are quite new, but already progress is monitored well and most emerging needs are spotted early and acted upon rigorously. The system is particularly good at identifying shortcomings in the provision for literacy and numeracy, but is less effective in monitoring progress in science and the progress of the more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head teacher has succeeded in building an ethos in which new pupils quickly adopt positive attitudes, feel secure and behave well. The most recent arrival of new pupils on an unprecedented scale across all year groups meant that some aspects of academic provision were under pressure. Changes promoted over the last 18 months, with significant local authority support, have improved many key areas. Upgraded tracking arrangements, the creation of new 'booster' groups, improved teaching and more effective monitoring by senior staff have restored pupils' good rate of progress and demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Some features are still developing: subject leadership is satisfactory, but its effectiveness is limited by the lack of time for subject leaders to observe and support colleagues and to very closely monitor the progress of pupils, particularly the more able. They also lack sufficient accountability for setting and taking responsibility for meeting whole-school targets in key subjects. Governors know their school well and support and challenge it appropriately. They have a good impact on pupils' personal and academic progress.

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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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

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	3
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edith Weston Primary School, Oakham, LE15 8HQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. You spoke highly of the school and your parents agree with you. The inspection showed that it is a good school and deserves your strong support.

It is particularly good in several ways.

- The Nursery and Reception (Early Years Foundation Stage) give children an excellent start.
- You make good progress despite many of you having to start a new school part way through the year.
- Teaching is good.
- Your behaviour is good.
- The headteacher and his colleagues run the school well.
- The extra sports and other learning opportunities offered by the school are good.

If the school is to improve even more it needs to:

- make sure more lessons have the lively, challenging and practical approach seen in the best lessons and particularly making sure that work for the more able pupils is difficult enough
- help to raise standards in Key Stage 2 science by monitoring your progress as well as it does in English and mathematics
- give the teachers in charge of English, mathematics and science more time to help staff with improving those subjects, be more involved in setting targets and making sure more able pupils always do as well as they can.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Edith Weston Primary.

Yours faithfully

Bob Drew

Lead inspector