

# Edith Cavell Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109433
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	337286
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thompson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Michael Vogel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Maggie Bilotti
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, one attending the school for half a day. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at some documentation and pupils' work. They received and scrutinised 51 questionnaires from parents, 66 from pupils and 14 from the staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorders, and that of pupils for whom English is an additional language
- attainment and progress at the end of Year 4
- the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation
- the impact of the curriculum on learning.

## Information about the school

This school is above average size. Close to half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds; most are of Indian or Pakistani heritage; a high proportion speaks English as an additional language and a few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils taking a free school meal is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The school is the only lower school in Bedford that includes a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. There are six pupils in the unit. The school is part of the Bedford Learning Community. It provides after-school care, and a breakfast club. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools' award and the Activemark. Most children move to the Beauchamp Middle School after leaving the school.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The Edith Cavell Lower School is a good school and enjoys the overwhelming support of parents, pupils and staff.

Attainment on entry to the school reflects the wide range of prior experiences and circumstances of the children. While, overall, attainment on entry is below the expected level, for a few pupils it is well below. The Nursery and Reception Years are effective and all children make good progress, though only a minority reach the expected levels at the end of the Reception Year. Good progress is maintained in Years 1 to 4 and, as a result, most pupils reach expected levels of attainment for their age by the time they leave the school. Achievement is good.

Teaching is good and there are instances where it is outstanding. Teaching in the unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is good, and for much of the time these pupils are integrated well into general classroom activities with effective support from the unit staff. Throughout the school, pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning have a marked impact on their progress and reflect teachers' high expectations. Relationships amongst the pupils and with the staff are good and this engenders confidence in the pupils. The written feedback on the work of some of the older pupils does not always help them to know how to improve.

The school provides a safe environment. Pupils feel safe and are able to seek the support of adults when needed. Most pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and all pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the factors which affect their physical well-being. Pupils are very keen to take part in physical exercise and eat healthily. Pupils contribute to the school and wider communities well. They play an active part in the school council, fund raising for charities and local activities. Pupils develop their work-based skill satisfactorily. At the end of Year 4, their oral, literacy and numeracy skills are as expected for their age and they have learnt to use information and communication technology satisfactorily. Helped by the good school ethos, pupils develop spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well. They have a good understanding of how to live and work harmoniously with one another.

The headteacher is well supported by an able group of senior leaders. The senior team works well together. The school works well in partnership with other agencies to improve and enrich pupils' learning. The recommendations for improvement made in the last inspection report have been implemented. Whilst the evaluation of attainment and progress is good, that of other aspects of the school lacks sharpness and is not routinely carried out. Overall, self-evaluation is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory, nevertheless, the governing body, under the direction of the new chair, is making good

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progress in developing its capability to hold the senior staff to account. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. The school is well managed on a day-to-day basis. It provides good value for money.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Undertake self-evaluation of all aspects of the school's work, develop plans to overcome any weaknesses identified and ensure that improvement plans are monitored and implemented within agreed periods of time.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - in the small minority of lessons where the teaching is satisfactory, the pace, drive and activities help to improve and enhance learning.
  - older pupils receive more written comments to help them see how they might improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

The skills and knowledge of the children on entry to the school fluctuate from year to year as a result of variation in the proportions of pupils entering with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, all children make good progress. In 2009, a large majority of children attained skills just below expected levels on entry to Year 1.

Over the past three years, pupils' progress in Years 1 to 4 has been consistently good. Attainment at the end of Year 4 has, nevertheless, fluctuated from year to year reflecting the differing proportions of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. At the end of Year 4 in 2009, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly as expected for the pupils' age. Attainment in reading and writing has improved over the past two years.

In all the lessons observed, pupils worked in an appropriate and safe manner and pupils say that they feel safe in school. Behaviour during lessons and around the school is good. The school is fully committed to encouraging pupils to lead healthy lifestyles. Pupils participate in a good range of games and sports outside normal school hours. Pupils play an active part in the school council and raise funds for charities. Their broadly average attainment in reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology prepares them satisfactorily for the world of work. Attendance is average and has improved over recent years. Pupils have a willingness to work together and with their teachers. Relationships in the school are very good. The Healthy Schools' award has had a beneficial impact on pupils' understanding of healthy living.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have good subject knowledge which enables them to ask open-ended questions that encourage pupils to think deeply about their responses as well as helping develop the correct subject vocabulary. Classroom assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and have good knowledge of their needs. There is good additional support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language. This helps them make good progress. Across the school, teachers make it clear what pupils are expected to learn and modify activities to take account of different ages and abilities. Good assessment systems help to ensure that this is successful so that pupils of all abilities make mostly good progress. Where the teaching is most successful, teachers make clear to pupils what they need to do to succeed and, subsequently, revisit this information to help pupils see how well they are doing. Information and communication technology supports learning well. For example, in a physical education lesson, a camcorder was used well to video pupils' performance in dance. This was then played back to highlight strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. Marking is up to date and provides positive comments; however, for the older pupils there are too few written comments that show them how their work might be improved. Within this generally good picture, there is a small minority of teaching that is only satisfactory. In these lessons, there are good features but learning does not have the drive and pace needed to ensure good progress. These lessons also lack excitement.

The curriculum is good and motivates pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to work hard and make good overall progress. Provision for pupils who have special educational

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needs and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of English language acquisition is good. This ensures that they have equal access to the curriculum. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection with a current and effective emphasis upon more creative approaches to learning. These give pupils more opportunities to apply their skills across a range of subjects and experiences in exciting activities linked to a common theme. For example, in a topic on Africa, the hall was set up as an airport and pupils were taken on an imaginary aeroplane journey to Africa. Associated activities in the classroom extended the learning effectively. This work enabled pupils to develop problem-solving and decision-making skills as well as helping extend their basic literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful ways. The weekly French lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is a good feature of the curriculum. Modern technologies are being used well to develop learning across subjects such as dance and in whole school topics. The range of extra-curricular activities, including a breakfast and after-school club and school clubs involving sports and the arts, is good. The curriculum is enriched by good use of visits into the community and visitors to school.

Pastoral support and guidance are good with some outstanding elements. The large majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire support this. The procedures to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in both the main school and in the unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, are excellent. The work of the learning mentor is particularly effective in this regard and in establishing working links with pupils' families. All staff work effectively to help promote the emotional and social well-being of all pupils and have a clear understanding of their needs. As a result, pupils develop self-esteem and say that they feel safe and supported. There are good transition arrangements as pupils move through the school and between the school and the receiving middle school, involving joint visits and projects.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher is well supported by an able group of senior leaders; some in the team are outstanding in the area of their responsibility. They work well and harmoniously together. The headteacher is good at delegating responsibility to others. The school is well managed on a day-to-day basis. All resources are deployed effectively and the school provides good value for money. The monitoring and tracking of pupils'

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performance has improved since the last inspection.

Governance is satisfactory. Under the leadership of a recently appointed chair, the governing body is beginning to develop its capability to hold leaders to account further but rightly recognises that more needs to be done. Its oversight of finances is good. It meets all its statutory responsibilities.

The school's ambition and vision are satisfactory. The school works with all agencies to improve and enrich pupils' learning. A more creative approach to learning has recently been introduced but has not been implemented for sufficient time to have had a beneficial impact on attainment. There is a weakness in taking an overview of the performance of the school and self-evaluation is not systematically or routinely carried out in all aspects of the school's work. A more complete self-evaluation has the potential to identify further ways to improve.

The ethos of the school is caring and supportive. This is particularly evident in the support provided to pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The school is a harmonious community in which pupils from all ethnic backgrounds work well together. All are given equal opportunities to perform and develop well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is satisfactory. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff. The school has clear policies for health and safety, which are monitored regularly. The school buildings and grounds are secure. Safety checks are regularly made by the appropriate external authorities and any recommendations they make are acted upon. Staff have been suitably training in child protection and regular risk assessments take place. This ensures that the school is a safe place.

The school promotes community cohesion well and is very inclusive. It has a good understanding of the diverse community it serves. Pupils engage in many activities in the local community and learn about international communities effectively. They are currently engaged in a project to learn about Kenya which involves local African families.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Whilst there are some able children, many join the school with little or no knowledge of English and having had restricted social opportunities. As a result of good support in the Nursery, the development of fluency in English and social skills is such that they are better placed to participate in lessons during the Reception Year. Progress in physical and personal, social and emotional development is good. Progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. Nevertheless, children were seen in a lesson in the Reception Year enthusiastically learning to relate letters with sounds well. At the end of the Reception Year, a large majority of children reach just below expected level. Both indoor and outdoor facilities have good resources and are well integrated in lessons. The curriculum is good and provides a good range of activities. The quality of teaching is good and activities well planned. Teachers are very knowledgeable and well deployed to support the children. Assessment of performance is good and well recorded. The leadership and management of the Nursery and Reception years are good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The vast majority of them say that their child enjoys school and makes good progress. A very small minority disagrees that the school prepares their child well for the future or takes account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the inspectors found no evidence to support these claims.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Edith Cavell Lower School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 243 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	73	13	25	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	61	19	37	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	35	30	59	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	31	31	61	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	19	37	30	59	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	35	28	55	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	41	28	55	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	31	27	53	1	2	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	33	30	59	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	29	27	53	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	24	29	57	3	6	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	12	24	30	59	4	8	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	45	25	49	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of The Edith Cavell Lower School, Bedford, MK41 7NH

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school and welcomed the opportunity to see you at work in your lessons. I thought that you would like to know what we found out about your school.

You enter the school with knowledge and skills lower than most children of the same age but make good progress during your time in the school. When you leave, your reading, writing and mathematical skills are broadly the same as other children of the same age. Most of the lessons we visited were good and we were able to see you doing lots of interesting activities. Your teachers set you targets that help you to see what to do. You meet most of these targets but I noticed that in a small number of lessons the pace and excitement was not enough to help you improve as much as you might. I have asked your teachers to correct this.

We looked at the way your teachers consider how well the school does. Whilst they assess some aspect of the school's work well, the assessment of other aspects lacks sharpness and is not always carried out. I have asked them to correct this and help the older pupils to make more progress by giving them more written comment about how to improve.

My best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Dr Peter J Thompson

Lead Inspector

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