

Eythorne and Elvington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118399
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339214
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sandra Tweddell

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 of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Carswell
Headteacher	Mrs G Pasola
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at samples of pupils' writing. They examined the school's raising attainment plan, assessment information, other key documents and 27 questionnaires from parents.

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

- the progress made by the most and least able children
- teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6
- the effectiveness of school leaders in raising attainment.

Information about the school

This small school serves families from the villages of Eythorne and Elvington. Most pupils come from Elvington, a former mining village with much social or housing association accommodation. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small number from other backgrounds. Many more pupils are entitled to free school meals than is found in most schools. Almost four out ten pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, a much higher proportion than is found in most schools. Many have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The school has had difficulties with staffing in the past few years but has settled recently. A nursery operates on the site and a children's centre opened on the site in June 2008. Both are privately operated. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

'I can honestly say that improvements have been made in every area.' This comment by a parent captures the school's recent progress. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been historically low, although the very small numbers in each year group mean that national test results need to be treated with caution. However, last year, results improved and the trend this year is in the same direction.

Pupils' attainment in mathematics is lower than in English, as English has been a focus for development over the past two years. Attainment in mathematics is weaker because some pupils have difficulty with mental calculations. The school has rightly recognised that pupils need more practical resources to help them overcome this weakness. As it has not been a main focus, provision in mathematics has not been monitored as rigorously as English and professional development not as systematic.

Children make a good start in the warm and welcoming Reception class and then make satisfactory progress from Years 1 to 6. More able pupils are now challenged more effectively and teachers provide opportunities to extend their learning further. One pupil, who had attended a local secondary school as part of the gifted and talented programme, held her peers in thrall over lunchtime as she explained the concept of probability. Equally, pupils who find learning difficult make the same progress as their peers because of the effective support they receive and work that is well matched to their needs. Teaching in the Reception class is good. Although there are still inconsistencies, teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 are improving because of the effect of careful observation by leaders and the resulting professional development. Consequently, many pupils are beginning to make good progress. Assessment of pupils' work is becoming more rigorous but many pupils do not know how to improve their work. Moreover, they are not sufficiently involved in assessing their own work.

The strongly nurturing ethos of the school fosters pupils' personal development well. In the Reception class, children settle quickly and learn to get on with adults and their peers. Pupils learn to respect themselves and others. Those who find it difficult to control their behaviour are helped to understand how to handle their emotions. The majority of pupils behave well around the school and in class because they are very clear about the school's code of conduct. They know about the importance of exercise and healthy eating; for example, as one boy said, 'too much sugar is bad for you.' Pupils say that they feel safe and this is echoed by parents, one of whom stated, 'The school is my child's extended family.' Pupils enjoy taking part in community events; for example, they welcome being part of the Dover Schools' Council and look forward to visiting the town hall to engage in debates. Nevertheless, the school is at an early stage in developing its strategy for community cohesion and the community is not always aware

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of its achievements.

The volatile teaching situation impeded the school's progress for a while, following the last inspection. These have been largely overcome and school leaders are working very closely with the local authority to bring about improvement. Leaders and governors have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development based on effective use of information from assessment. The school now has a very clear direction, supported by all, and this is evident in the recent improvements in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils' achievement improved last year and is continuing to do so this year. These improvements have set the school on the road to being good. Nevertheless, they are fairly recent and not yet firmly embedded, indicating that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain its improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics by June 2010 by:
- implementing plans for professional development
- improving the resources for practical mathematics
- monitoring provision rigorously to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning
- develop an action plan for mathematics in the light of the monitoring and evaluation.
- Extend the use of assessment for learning in all classrooms by:
- giving pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work
- strengthening the involvement of pupils in self-assessment.
- Develop the strategy for community cohesion and raise the profile of the school in the community by extending systems of communication.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In spite of the good progress in the Reception class, pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is below that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress but this is improving. In lessons, many pupils are beginning to make better progress because they are generally motivated by the teaching and enjoy school. Nevertheless, there are still some inconsistencies in their learning related to the quality of teaching. Pupils' learning is improving because they have positive attitudes and draw on their knowledge from previous lessons to help them. In one class, every pupil joined in a discussion about how best to write a short story. Pupils in another class evaluated the work of their peers, having learned how to give a critical evaluation. The learning and progress in both these classes was good. On a few occasions, learning is not as good because teaching is pedestrian and does not motivate the pupils as much.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good behaviour and improving attendance. A small number of families persist in sending their children late to school which does not prepare them well for learning. Pupils learn right from wrong and how to relate to adults and one another. They have confidence in the adults in the school. One

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pupil talked about how his behaviour had improved because of this support. Older pupils care for younger ones; for example, a young child was having difficulties opening a door at playtime and an older child rushed to help him. Pupils' good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise is reflected in the school's national awards in this area. Many walk to school as part of an organised group. They take part in community events, including parish council discussions about issues such as an indoor play area in Dover, and raise funds for international causes such as events in Sumatra and preserving the rainforests. Older pupils feel well prepared for secondary schools, although they are currently hampered by weaker skills in mathematics.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

'You learn loads of things here!' This statement by a boy provoked a lively discussion from pupils about what they had learned about a range of subjects. This is a result of a review of the curriculum and the introduction of more practical hands-on activities. This curriculum is relatively new and is still being developed so it is too early to see its full impact on pupils' achievement. Teaching and learning are currently inconsistent, but

¹ 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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improving because of a more effective system of reviewing the quality of lessons that includes helpful feedback to teachers and support to help them to improve. Improved teaching has not yet had a full impact on pupils' progress over time. Lesson planning is thorough and gives good structure to lessons. Teachers handle the very wide range of ages and abilities well through a range of activities designed successfully to meet the different learning needs.

A significant proportion of pupils lack self-confidence, which hampers their learning, but the strongly nurturing ethos, in which each pupil feels valued, raises their self-esteem. Teaching assistants most ably support groups of pupils; they are very clear about their roles and know the children well. Inconsistencies in teaching concern the use of assessment and sometimes classroom management. All teachers make the purpose of lessons clear and assess pupils' work, but the quality of comments is inconsistent and they do not always give pupils helpful guidance as to how they can improve their work. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported effectively by good care and careful planning to meet their needs. The curriculum is successfully enhanced by the extended school's provision. The wide range of well-attended clubs adds an extra dimension to pupils' learning, although the range of visits and visitors is limited.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Adults in the school work very closely as a team and their morale is high because, as several parents recognise, they are highly motivated to do their best for their pupils. The headteacher, working closely with the local authority, has provided a good model of improving the quality of teaching and learning. The impact of this is seen in rising attainment, for example in information and communication technology. Governors introduced a new structure for their work in September of this year following an evaluation of how they could be more effective. They are assiduous about safeguarding pupils and this documentation is fully up to date. The review of a few policies, however, is overdue. The school is very clear about the population it serves and uses this information well to ensure that all pupils do equally well and are equally involved in the life of the school. A start has been made on developing strategies for community cohesion through an audit and action plan, but this has yet to be carried through. Governors informally evaluate their work on community cohesion.

Information from assessment is used well to target resources at pupils who are at risk of

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underachieving. The school set challenging targets for attendance and achieved them last year. The school met or exceeded its targets in 2009 for both Year 2 and Year 6. Strong partnerships with other schools, extended schools' provision and the local authority support the achievement of pupils. With the good support of the family liaison officer, the school works hard to reach out to parents through surveys and meetings about their child's progress. However, a number of parents are not involved in their child's learning. This was tackled recently by the introduction of family learning packs. The whole family was invited to make a kite that flew successfully and most pupils proudly arrived with a kite.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They arrive with skills and understanding that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Good leadership and an enthusiastic team of adults result in children making good progress over the year but still with ground to make up, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

Children respond very well to the calm yet challenging ethos of the class. They quickly learn to become independent because adults expect them to become self-sufficient. They love the gentle humour employed by adults and this motivates them to listen and want to learn. They have many opportunities to develop their skills of language through interaction with adults who encourage them to give more than one-word answers. The classroom provides a rich environment for developing skills of literacy and number, although the book area is not enticing. Planning ensures that children develop a

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curiosity about the world. After dressing themselves in wellingtons and coats, they set off eagerly to explore the grounds for signs of autumn and were keen to share their findings with adults and peers. Careful questioning by adults encouraged them to think about the world in which they live.

A new system of recording the progress of children is being trialled. It is too early to see how effective this will be, but already, observations are being carefully recorded and are beginning to build up a useful record of progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire are very happy with the school. They find staff to be very approachable and helpful, prepared to listen and to act on their concerns. A few state that their children's progress has improved and that their more able child is well supported. A small number of parents have a justified concern about their child's progress in mathematics. A very small proportion are concerned about discipline and a number commented on a lack of information about how to help their child's learning. These concerns were not supported by inspection evidence.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eythorne and Elvington 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	74	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	67	8	30	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	56	11	41	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	59	9	33	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	63	8	30	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	67	6	22	3	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	60	10	37	0	0	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	59	9	33	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	56	11	40	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	48	11	40	2	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	52	11	40	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	52	10	37	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	67	7	26	1	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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



9 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eythorne and Elvington Primary School, Dover CT15 4AN

You may remember that we visited your school recently. Thank you for talking to us about your work, especially the school council members who gave up part of their lunchtime. I enjoyed hearing about all that you do in school. It was good to join the Reception class when you walked round your lovely grounds to look for signs of autumn.

Your school is giving you a satisfactory education. Your headteacher and teachers have been reviewing the effectiveness of their work and finding new ways of helping you to learn better. Their work is beginning to have an effect and you are starting to make better progress. Most of you work hard and many of you told me that you enjoyed lessons, especially when they involved practical work, such as in science. Most of you behave well and those of you who sometimes lose your temper learn how to control it. You say that you feel safe and cared for in school and I agree with you. The adults in your school go out of their way to make sure that you are looked after well. It was interesting to hear you talk about how to live healthily. I was very impressed with those of you who attend the Dover Schools Council to represent your school.

Your headteacher and I agreed three things that your school needs to do to improve further. These are:

- make sure that your work in mathematics is as good as it is English
- help you to understand how to make your work even better by making suggestions as to how it can improve; you can help by following these ideas
- publish your school's achievements more widely in the local community so that everyone knows about your successes.

It was a pleasure to visit you. Enjoy your work and every good wish for the future.

Yours faithfully

Sandra Tweddell

Lead Inspector

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