

Eaton Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103923
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355491
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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 of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Richmond
Headteacher	Susan Ramsay
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 23 lessons and observed 14 teachers. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body and local authority, and held discussions with teaching and support staff, and the school council. They attended assemblies, daily registration sessions, looked at pupils' work, and talked with many pupils informally during the inspection. School documents were scrutinised including policies, development plans, the self-evaluation report, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documents. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined, as well as the headteacher's reports to governors, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires returned by 58 parents and carers, 16 members of staff and 100 Key Stage 2 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The ways the school has worked to improve the attainment and progress of pupils by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in writing.
- The development of the school's work to develop teachers' use of assessment, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The impact of school leaders at all levels to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress throughout the school.

Information about the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. It was known formerly, and reported on by Ofsted, as Cronehills Junior and Infant School. It changed its name to Eaton Valley Primary School when, in September 2009, it relocated to new buildings on its present site. A new headteacher was appointed to the school from September 2010. For the spring term 2011, an acting deputy headteacher, seconded from another school, joined the staff. A new permanent deputy headteacher has now been appointed to take up the post from the start of the summer term 2011.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Most pupils are from White or Asian backgrounds. An above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is average; most have moderate or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. However, the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils join or leave the school each year other than at the usual times. The school has gained Platinum Healthy Schools status.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school's effectiveness is inadequate. Its capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate because it has not established a track record of successful improvement. The school has made insufficient progress in tackling the key areas identified for improvement at its last inspection. Published performance data and the school's own records show that between 2008 and 2010, pupils' attainment and progress were inadequate. The school does not analyse pupils' performance adequately and has insufficient information, for example, of the progress and attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This further detracts from its capacity to improve.

The proportion of good or better teaching is too low to raise pupils' achievements quickly. Teachers' lesson planning takes insufficient account of the individual needs of pupils to ensure that they make rapid progress.

The new headteacher provides a clear direction to the school's work and is beginning to develop an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. She is leading effectively from the front and setting a good example to staff, but cannot secure all the necessary improvements on her own, given that there is no substantive senior team. A new team of middle leaders has yet to impact on the school's improvement because their roles in monitoring and evaluation are insufficiently developed.

A new assessment and tracking system has been implemented to monitor pupils' progress in writing more effectively. Information from this monitoring is helping the school to set individual targets for learning so that teachers and pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. This approach is starting to have a demonstrable impact on the quality of teachers' marking and the standard of pupils' writing. Although the curriculum is planned satisfactorily, opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across a range of subjects are insufficient.

The school provides a secure environment. Most pupils and almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider that the school is a safe place. The new buildings are cared for well and pupils value and help look after the premises. However, the governing body has not met its statutory duties in key areas, particularly those relating to safeguarding and the monitoring, updating, review and approval of the complete range of statutory policies and procedures. Neither have they ensured all relevant policies and procedures relating to child protection are available on request to parents and carers.

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Consequently, governance, leadership and management, safeguarding and care, guidance and support are all inadequate. Attendance, although improving, remains low; persistent absence limits pupils' opportunities for consolidating and making progress in their learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the rate of pupils' progress across the school by:
 - monitoring pupils' progress rigorously by establishing clear assessment and tracking systems
 - ensuring that assessment data and progress tracking are used more effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make good gains in their learning
 - ensuring that all pupils are set clear, individual targets for improvement in reading and mathematics, similar to those in writing, so they know what they are aiming to achieve
 - developing pupils' use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the range of curriculum subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - developing teachers' use of assessment, including the use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and to identify the next steps in learning
 - developing teachers' awareness of the learning needs of different groups of pupils so that lesson planning takes full account of the range of abilities in each class
 - providing increased challenge for more-able pupils so that they achieve in line with their capabilities
 - helping pupils to develop independent learning skills.
- Strengthen the leadership, management and governance of the school by:
 - ensuring that all middle and subject leaders develop fully their skills in monitoring, data analysis and evaluation
 - ensuring that the governing body meets in full its statutory duties by monitoring, reviewing, updating and approving all required policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding
 - making readily available to parents and carers information on all relevant policies and procedures relating to child protection.
- Work with pupils, parents, carers and the education welfare officer to reduce unauthorised absence and improve attendance to the school's target of at least 94%.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupil attainment is inadequate. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own assessment that pupils' attainment is low overall for all groups of pupils. In 2010 attainment at the end of Year 2 was low for girls and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals; it was below average for pupils with a special educational needs and/or disabilities and well

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below average for other pupils. While attainment overall by Year 2 has been improving, no pupil gained a higher level in writing; the proportions gaining higher levels in reading and mathematics were below average. In 2010, pupils in Year 6 did not take the national tests. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment at the end of Year 6 was below average in English and low for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, compared to similar groups nationally. Progress currently being made in English and mathematics by pupils in Year 6 is not strong enough to make up lost ground quickly. As a result, too many pupils in this year group are still working below age-related expectations. The headteacher's focus on improving assessment in writing is starting to have an impact, but there is much more to do. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, is similar to that of other pupils and is inadequate.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour make a satisfactory contribution to their learning. When actively involved in pair and group discussion, and when challenged well by teachers' questions, pupils make good progress in developing their ideas. This was seen in a good English lesson where pupils in Year 5 discussed the thoughts and feelings of the characters in the poem 'The Highwayman'. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are more advanced than their writing skills and not all lessons give pupils the chance to practise these skills equally or consistently. Pupils take pride in their work, but handwriting skills are highly variable and they often struggle with writing more complex sentences.

When given the opportunity, pupils welcome active involvement in lessons. Pupils from different backgrounds work cooperatively and play well together. They are proud of their school, and older pupils take on responsibilities willingly. A newly formed school council actively promotes the recently established breakfast club. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in local environmental projects and initiatives promoting healthy lifestyles.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is inadequate and is not supported by effective use of assessment to support learning. Most teachers have the trust and confidence of their pupils, and working relationships are good. However, teachers often talk for too long and pupils become passive listeners rather than active learners. The use of questioning to check pupils' understanding of their work is inconsistent across the school. Lesson planning identifies different work for lower, middle and higher ability pupils, but this is often just for broad groups with limited planning for individual pupils. Little evidence was seen of planning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and none for those for who speak English as an additional language, even where there is additional classroom support. Lesson planning tends to describe what will happen in the lesson, with only limited consideration of how the objectives will be achieved or assessed. Pupils are given targets for writing, but rarely for other work.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. New middle leaders have made a positive start in developing a more creative approach to the curriculum. The aim is to provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in subjects other than literacy and numeracy and to ensure work is modified to better meet the needs of individual pupils. However, this is in the early stages of development. The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors, and a satisfactory range of popular and well-attended clubs.

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The school has strong links with outside agencies to help support its pupils, particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. The parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who responded to the questionnaire, are appreciative of such support. However, support for the academic needs of such pupils, and those for whom English is an additional language, are not targeted sufficiently well.

Close monitoring of attendance and good partnership work with the education welfare officer this year has raised attendance significantly from 89% to 92%. However, because of the shortcomings in matters relating to safeguarding, the quality of care, guidance and support are inadequate overall.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

In the short time she has been in post, the headteacher has put in place a number of well-considered initiatives for monitoring the school's work and improving the use of assessment. However, these initiatives have yet to have full impact in increasing the proportion of good and better teaching and ensuring pupils make consistently good progress. As yet, there are no formal systems to monitor and assess the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is insufficient focus on the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language or who may be gifted and/or talented; the monitoring of the progress of such groups remains inadequate. Consequently, the promotion of equality of opportunity is inadequate as the gaps in performance between the different groups of pupils are not closing quickly enough.

A number of matters were brought to the attention of the school, including some health and safety regulations relating to the newly established Breakfast Club, such as ensuring proper registration of all attending. Some of these were resolved during the inspection, but others remain in the process of resolution.

Overall, partnerships to promote pupils' learning and welfare are satisfactory, particularly those to support the personal and pastoral needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. The school is making effective use of support from the local authority to drive school improvement work. A satisfactory policy and approach to promoting community cohesion have been established. As a result, staff and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work and cooperate well together.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

The new head of the Early Years Foundation Stage is settling well into her role and providing satisfactory leadership. She did not inherit much data or analysis on past performance when she took up the post last year. Teachers' assessments show that the development of children currently in the Nursery was well below national expectations on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and below for those in the Reception class. Children have made satisfactory progress from September 2010. Satisfactory approaches to ensuring children's welfare, and systems of assessment, have been established, with a common approach across both Nursery and Reception classes. Assessment is developing well and based on regular observations of the children. Children's independence and cooperation are being fostered well as part of their social development. However, planning, although often detailed, is focused more on the needs of broad groups rather than individuals. There is a satisfactory balance of adult led and purposeful free-choice activities for the children.

Currently, the indoor provision is better because outdoor facilities are still being developed. The absence of markings on the outside area floor sometimes leads to random rather than purposeful play, for example, when riding tricycles or other play vehicles. However, children play happily. Inspectors observed children enjoying a range of literacy and numeracy activities based on their dinosaur project, and taking pleasure from exploring simple information books. Dinosaur bones were used well for creative and imaginative play as well as for promoting children's counting skills.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A lower than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. However, those who did so, and those with whom inspectors spoke at the start of the school day, are positive about the school and what it has to offer their children. Almost all say their children enjoy school. A few parents and carers have some concerns about the way unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors found that a few pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour consistently well throughout the day without additional help. The school provides satisfactory pastoral support for these pupils, but learning support has shortcomings. Only two-thirds of those responding felt their children were prepared well enough for their future lives and education. Inspection findings endorse these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eaton Valley Primary 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 354 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	50	28	48	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	52	27	47	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	38	30	52	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	41	28	48	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	47	26	45	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	43	23	40	7	12	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	34	30	52	3	5	1	2
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)	17	29	21	36	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	26	34	59	6	10	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	33	24	41	9	16	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	31	30	52	5	9	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	40	30	52	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	47	27	47	2	3	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



18 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eaton Valley Primary School, West Bromwich, B71 4BU

We would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you, watching you at work, and listening to what you had to tell us about your school. You told us your school is a friendly place, and we saw that for ourselves in the way you get on with each other. You appreciate the new school buildings and grounds, and take good care of them.

Your headteacher has only been at the school for two terms, but she has a good understanding of what is needed to help your school to improve. She has already started to put some of her ideas and plans in place, and is working with your teachers to make the school better. However, too many of you are not making the progress which you should, or attaining well enough. The school needs extra help to make some important changes. We have therefore placed the school in special measures; this means that inspectors will visit at regular intervals to see that progress is being made. They will be very interested to hear your views on how things are improving.

You told us that you feel safe in the school, but we found that some government rules are not in place. We have asked the governing body to make sure that these are corrected. We have also asked the governing body to be more thorough in the work they do with the school. The inspection team has asked your headteacher to work with staff to improve the ways they check your work and progress, and set you targets so you know what you need to do to make your work better. We also suggested that your teachers ask you more questions during lessons to make sure you understand your work and help you to work more confidently on your own. One of the most important things we want the school to do is to make sure you are set work at the right level for you so that it is not too easy or too hard.

You can help by continuing to support your teachers and by making every effort to attend school regularly. The school will be able to improve faster if all of you come to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller

Lead inspector

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