

# The Edward Francis Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115012
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311790
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Milton

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Stan Rae
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Partridge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Uplands Park Road Rayleigh Essex SS6 8AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 776501
<b>Fax number</b>	01268 745992

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is average in size and shares its site with an infant school. The two schools are separate but have the same governing body. There are far fewer pupils entitled to free school meals than in most schools. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. The majority of pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The school has received a number of awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, the Sports Active Mark and the Football Association's Charter Standard.

## 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 with a significant number of strengths. Its good leadership ensures that all staff are committed to building on its successes and improving further. Parents are very supportive of the school. Through fund-raising events, the Parents' Association has made significant additions to the school's resources. On entry to the school, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, writing and mathematics are generally above average. Pupils achieve well and their rates of progress are improving quickly because of good teaching and assessment. By Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science, as well as high standards in other subjects such as art and information and communication technology (ICT). There are no significant differences in the progress made by boys and girls, or by pupils of different abilities and backgrounds.

Leadership and management have created a common sense of purpose amongst staff. Adults at the school are particularly effective in securing pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, their attendance is above average and they really enjoy school. They feel very secure at school and are particularly knowledgeable about how to keep safe in different situations. The headteacher ensures that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and good steps are taken to address weaknesses. The school carefully tracks the progress made by each pupil in English, mathematics and science but there is scope for these systems to be even more efficient.

Good teaching is effectively developing pupils' very good attitudes to work, and it is helping to quickly improve pupils' rates of progress. The skills of teaching assistants are used particularly well to help pupils learn. Although teachers provide positive feedback to pupils on their work, marking does not always give pupils enough guidance about how to improve their work. The interesting curriculum is well matched to the pupils' interests, and effectively fosters their enjoyment of learning. Pupils are motivated and inspired to do their best by special weeks, such as art week, interesting links between subjects, and learning activities which catch their imagination. In addition, the curriculum is structured carefully to help pupils to understand how to live healthy lives. For example, there is a good programme of physical education and sports. There are good levels of care, support and guidance, especially for vulnerable pupils. Pupils have termly targets for improving their work in English, mathematics and science and these are understood by most, but not all pupils.

Governance is good, especially in relation to the strategic management of the school's finances. Effective action has been taken to secure improvement since the last inspection and the school demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking, target-setting and the tracking of pupils' progress are used even more effectively to help pupils make even faster progress and achieve as much as they can.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The standards for pupils in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. They are high in other subjects. A large majority of pupils are making good or better progress. Pupils' rates of progress are improving quickly as a result of the good range of actions taken by the

school in recent years together with the good teaching. So far this school year, for example, pupils' progress in English is at least good because pupils are set targets for reading and writing that are based on assessment, new teaching approaches have been introduced and a wide range of strategies are used to help underachieving pupils. Pupils are making great strides in art because a wide range of skills are taught effectively and pupils are inspired by the tasks they are set. Pupils' standards are high for singing because of expert teaching. The high quality computer suite is used well to help pupils achieve high standards in ICT. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because provision is matched carefully to their learning needs and their progress is carefully monitored. There are some very good activities for gifted and talented pupils, and as a result they also make good progress. Pupils are set challenging targets for the end of Year 6 and these were achieved in 2006. Although the targets were missed in 2007, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science matched national averages. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve their challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils love coming to school, especially where lessons give them opportunities to find things out for themselves. Their attendance is above average. They are very well mannered and older pupils are confident to ask questions and to learn from their mistakes. Their spiritual, moral, and social development is outstanding. They learn a great deal about their own culture and cultures in other countries. In addition, their learning about the richness and diversity of cultures in Britain is very effective. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe in a range of situations. They enjoy taking responsibility - for example, as members of the effective class and school councils. Many pupils take advantage of the numerous opportunities to keep fit. They participate in group activities very effectively, and this contributes significantly to their social and emotional development. Pupils are heavily involved in their school and the wider community. Their behaviour is very good indeed. They are very well prepared for their next stage of education as their key skills are above average and they have very strong social skills. In addition, they have developed their initiative very well through, for example, the school's enterprise scheme which involves classes in using a loan to raise money for a charity of their choice.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is highly effective in developing pupils' very good attitudes to work, as well as significantly increasing pupils' rates of progress. Common strengths of the teaching are effective class management which helps pupils to work well even when not directly supervised, very effective use of teaching assistants to help pupils learn in all parts of lessons and matching work effectively to pupils' differing learning needs. At the start of a mathematics lesson, for example, the teaching assistant provided two concurrent mental mathematics activities so that all pupils were fully involved in learning. In a lesson where pupils' learning was outstanding, the motivating, challenging work caught the pupils' imagination and built extremely well on what they had achieved in the previous week.

Some but not all marking is of a high quality and makes clear to pupils what they have achieved and how they can improve their work. Pupils are often involved in assessing their own learning during lessons with different symbols, while in some classes they mark their own work well using specific assessment criteria. Sometimes opportunities are missed to ask pupils to explain their answers to questions that some other pupils find difficult. Although the pace of lessons is generally brisk, occasionally the pace slackens for a particular activity and this reduces pupils' progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The learning activities meet the needs of all pupils, with some good provision for gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The work of teaching assistants is carefully planned, and this makes an important contribution to involving all pupils in learning. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is fostered by special weeks and links between subjects. During a special art week, for example, pupils made very good progress in developing their knowledge and skills as very effective links were made between art and other subjects and cultures. In Year 6, pupils took on the role of consultants required to give advice about how flood plain land should be used. This geography work was linked well to literacy and science, and also to design and technology, as pupils made vegetarian pasties which they ate for lunch during fieldwork. The curriculum includes 'active bursts' each afternoon as, for example, pupils break off from classroom work for ten minutes of skipping. There is a good range of before-school, lunchtime and after-school clubs. The curriculum is enriched through links with two local secondary schools as well as by a good range of visits and visitors. Good use is made of the computer suite to enhance pupils' learning in a wide range of other subjects.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The staff are fully committed to the care of the pupils and this has a particularly strong impact on pupils' personal development. Great emphasis is placed on good relationships and purposeful learning. Parents appreciate that their children transfer smoothly from the neighbouring infant school. Good health and safety procedures are in place. A small minority of parents are concerned about communication between the school and home, but inspection evidence shows that a good range of communication is used by the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet requirements. There is very good support for vulnerable pupils and, as a result, they make good progress. As necessary, a full range of external children's services is used to support pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good guidance. Pupils in each class have curricular targets for English, mathematics and science, and these are shared with parents. However, a minority of pupils do not fully understand their targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has established a leadership team that has some significant strengths. There is a common sense of purpose amongst all staff to improve pupils' achievement and provide a high quality of care. The accurate self-evaluation takes into account the views of staff, pupils and parents. Good follow-up actions are taken to address any weaknesses. The governing body

is effective but some governors are insufficiently involved in the school's strategic planning. In addition to the termly plan for raising achievement, there is an overall school development plan (SDP). Some of the actions identified in the SDP are not as precise as those specified in the termly plan. This limits the use of the SDP as a management tool for monitoring and evaluating new initiatives. The school tracks the progress of each pupil carefully in English, mathematics and science, and appropriate actions are taken to follow up pupils who are underachieving. However, there are several different tracking documents, which is leading to some inefficiencies. Nevertheless, the school's resources, including the skills of staff and time available during the school day, are used well so that the school gives good value for money.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

7 November 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of The Edward Francis Junior School, Rayleigh SS6 8AZ

Mrs Kauffman and I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting Mrs Partridge, the staff and many of you. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, at playtimes and in meetings with members of the school council and Year 6. I am very grateful to so many of your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was interesting to hear from you that you like school, feel very safe and enjoyed art week. You clearly enjoy playtimes and 'active bursts' in the afternoon. It was very good to listen to your singing in assembly.

You behave very well and are always keen to learn. The progress you make is constantly improving because teaching is good and the staff are working hard to help you all to make gains in your knowledge and understanding, all of the time. Your teachers mark your work regularly but sometimes their comments do not always tell you exactly how to improve your work. Your teachers set you targets each term to help you improve in English, mathematics and science, but some pupils do not fully understand these targets. We have asked your teachers to look at both of these issues. It was good to see you assessing how much you had learnt in lessons, and some of you mark your own work accurately. The school provides some really interesting things for you to do, and the teaching usually makes things interesting too. The Year 6 river fieldwork sounded really enjoyable, especially as the pupils took their own lunches that they had made in design and technology. The school provides good levels of care for you all.

You can help the school to improve by continuing to behave and work so well, by thinking carefully about what you need to do to achieve your targets, and by acting on your teachers' comments in your books.

Best wishes for the rest of the school year

Mike Milton

Lead inspector