

Edgar Sewter Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124585
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328170
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	187
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Jean Macheath MBE
Headteacher	Mr Peter Rodgers
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Norwich Road Halesworth Suffolk IP19 8BU

Age group	3–8
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Inspection number	328170

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school draws most of its pupils from the market town of Halesworth in which it is situated. The large majority of pupils are White British. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) move from the school run Nursery to Reception at the start of the term in which they reach the age of five. The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is higher than in most schools as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of those with learning difficulties have literacy needs. The school has a number of awards for promoting health and the environment such as the National Healthy Schools Award.

Breakfast, after school and holiday clubs are available at the school. There is also a privately-run playgroup on site.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Edgar Sewter Community Primary provides a good education for its pupils. The success of the school is down to good leadership which has effectively improved provision and raised standards, particularly in writing, since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Pupils thrive at the school and enjoy all it has to offer. A strong sense of community enables pupils to feel that they belong. Behaviour is good and relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Parents rightly praise the school for the high quality of care it provides and the support they and their children receive.

Good teaching means that progress is good overall and especially so in writing. Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below age-related expectations. Their skills in literacy and calculation are well below average. They make good progress both in the Nursery and Reception classes so that overall standards are in line with national averages by the end of the EYFS. However, standards in literacy, though improved, remain below average by the end of the EYFS. Aspects of numeracy, especially calculation, also remain a little below average but not as significantly as in literacy. Good progress in English means that standards are in line with national averages by the end of Years 2 and 4. In writing, they are a little above average. Standards in mathematics are a little lower though remaining broadly in line with national averages by the end of Years 2 and 4. Whilst many pupils make good progress in mathematics, able pupils often make slower progress, especially in Years 3 and 4. This is because they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and sometimes the pace of learning is slow. Pupils' problem-solving skills are also weaker and this means that overall progress in mathematics, though satisfactory, is not as good as in English. To address this, new methods of teaching problem solving and mental mathematics have been put in place. Pupils' skills of analysis and critical thinking are also being developed using new ways of questioning and helping pupils to work through ideas. Whilst there are signs that these initiatives are beginning to make an impact, and have further improved the quality of teaching, they have not been in place long enough to improve standards or achievement in mathematics.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A well-developed English curriculum has ensured a wide range of opportunities for pupils to read and write in subjects across the curriculum. Teachers also use discussion, drama and role play effectively to enable pupils to develop and rehearse ideas before they begin writing. These prepare pupils well for getting ideas down on paper and extending their vocabulary. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and most adopt good eating habits. Participation in the wide range of sporting activities is good. Pupils' social and moral development is outstanding. They work very well with one another demonstrating excellent teamwork and sharing of ideas. These skills, coupled with their growing confidence as learners and overall good progress in learning, prepare them well for their next steps in education.

High quality care and support contribute to pupils' sense of safety and well-being. The school draws on an excellent range of support services and partners to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Assessment is good and used to set appropriate targets for learning.

The school makes good use of data and information from self-evaluation to help direct its school improvement strategies. For example, the recent initiative to improve pupils' problem-solving skills and a new programme for teaching children letters and sounds in the

EYFS have come about through careful tracking of progress and evaluation of teaching and learning. Successful initiatives include work on writing, which has helped to improve the quality of pupils' work, and developing a robust system for tracking pupils' progress. Senior staff are effectively involved in checking the work of the school. However, middle managers are not as actively involved in monitoring or in helping senior staff evaluate ongoing success of new initiatives. Governors provide good oversight of the school's work and a clear strategic steer for its future development. Given the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and its track record of improvement, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. They enter Nursery with personal and social skills that are in line with age-related expectations and, by the end of the EYFS, their personal, social and emotional development is above average. Children improve their literacy and numeracy skills well although their attainment in literacy in particular remains below average. Good teaching in both Nursery and Reception is responsible for their good progress. Children have access to a wide range of practical and creative activities that encourage them to participate and enjoy their learning. While the Reception classes make good use of the outdoor areas for planned activities, these are not always available to children throughout the day. Sessions led by adults are well managed so that children are kept interested and involved. The pace is usually brisk and resources are of good quality. Staff make diligent observations of children's progress. These are used well to plan future work. Good relationships between adults and children ensure that they cooperate well with staff and one another. Personal and social development is an integral part of day-to-day activities. Staff conscientiously find opportunities to talk to children and ask questions to help develop their speaking and listening. The new programme on letters and sounds is helping children to develop better reading and writing but it is at an early stage of development. The EYFS is well led and managed. There is a clear direction for development and children's progress is effectively tracked. However, the EYFS coordinator is not actively enough involved in checking the teaching, including evaluating the impact of the new letters and sounds initiative.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the pace and challenge of teaching in mathematics, especially in Years 3 and 4, to help ensure that pupils, particularly the more able, make better progress.
- Involve middle managers in monitoring new initiatives to help ensure that they are having the desired impact on pupils' learning and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Assessments over the last three years indicate that standards are in line with national averages by the end of Year 2. They are slightly above average in writing and usually in line with national averages in mathematics. Pupils make good progress and show good improvement in all areas of English but especially in writing. Though standards remain broadly average by the end of Year 4, they show further improvement from the end of Year 2 especially in English where pupils meet challenging targets. Whilst many pupils make good progress in mathematics in Years 1 to 2, many others struggle with problems and find mental mathematics difficult. As calculations become more demanding in Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress, though remaining

satisfactory, is hindered by their weaker problem-solving skills. In addition, able pupils are not stretched enough and, therefore, do not always meet the challenging targets set. Pupils who find learning difficult and those with disabilities are very well supported and make good progress as do the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their satisfactory and improving attendance. Pupils take great pride in their achievements and talk with particular satisfaction about the progress shown in their year books. They are courteous and polite showing great respect for one another, the adults and the school. Behaviour in lessons is good and supports learning. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. Spiritual development is good because it is a part of everyday life. Assemblies nurture pupils' confidence and sense of self-esteem by actively involving them and celebrating their achievements. While there are opportunities for cultural development, pupils have little first hand experience of people who are different, so their knowledge of cultural diversity in Britain is less well developed than other areas. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise. Most make good efforts to eat healthily. They look after one another well and have a good awareness of personal safety, and this influences what they do. They readily take on many responsibilities and make a good contribution to the school and wider community by leading playtime games and raising funds for good causes nationally and internationally. Pupils' preparation for their future life is good because they know how to work both independently and as members of a team.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan carefully and clearly identify the lesson's learning objectives for all lessons. They manage classes well and provide interesting activities especially in literacy. Support staff are well deployed and work effectively to support individuals and groups in lessons. Work is usually well matched to pupils' individual needs. However, it is at times too easy in mathematics for the more able pupils. Sometimes, the pace of learning is slowed by spending too long on introductions and not getting pupils actively engaged quickly enough. The quality of questioning is improving as a result of the recent initiatives on developing pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. In the best lessons, questioning is sharply focused on probing pupils' understanding and developing their capacity to think for themselves. Pupils' work is well marked. Written comments tell pupils how well they are doing and usually give them helpful guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development so they become confident learners. Good opportunities for speaking and listening and writing in other subjects support pupils' good progress in these areas. Improvements to the curriculum, such as problem-solving skills in mathematics and a new programme to develop cross-curricular skills such as analytical thinking and evaluation, are beginning to have a positive impact on learning. Support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties are well developed and, consequently,

enable these pupils to do well. Visitors and a good variety of visits, often linked to themed 'activity days', such as 'decorating curtains', bring learning to life and add much to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils' clear recollections of these reflect the positive impact on their learning. Pupils enjoy French and are keen to speak it. An excellent range of extra-curricular activities are popular and well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A strong ethos of inclusion generates a real sense of community. Pupils thrive emotionally and feel safe because staff attend well to their needs and readily provide effective guidance. The very few behavioural incidents are handled promptly and effectively. The school meets requirements for safeguarding its pupils. There are excellent links with outside agencies so that extra support is provided for individuals and their families where appropriate. The school works very effectively with parents to address any issues of behaviour, attendance or personal care and well-being. It also encourages parental involvement in their children's learning, but not always with the same success. Guidance and support through marking and individual targets are good and particularly effective when explained to parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together they have established good teamwork amongst staff and a clear direction for development. New initiatives are well planned and implemented carefully. Good monitoring of teaching by senior staff ensures that they have an accurate view of the impact on pupils' learning. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress against challenging targets enables the school to identify and, in most instances, tackle underachievement quickly. Middle managers provide good support to their colleagues and are actively engaged in developing curriculum and assessment in their areas of responsibility. However, they are not involved enough in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching or the impact of new initiatives. This reduces their ability to be more active in driving forward school improvement. Governors actively promote local links so that community cohesion overall is good and, at school level, it is strong. However, community cohesion is a mixed picture because the school's approach in relation to the UK community is not as well developed. International links with, for example, a school in Kenya provide good opportunities for pupils to learn about the global community.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

29 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edgar Sewter Community Primary School, Halesworth, IP19 8BU

We enjoyed visiting your school and would like to thank you for making us feel welcome. It was very nice to meet you and watch your lessons. The school gives you a good education and ensures that you are ready for your next step in life.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You develop into thoughtful, confident and self-assured youngsters who are polite, considerate and keen to do well.
- The school provides a positive and welcoming atmosphere. This creates a strong sense of community and makes pupils feel safe and happy at school.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception get a good start to their education.
- You are taught well and, as a result, make good progress in your learning, especially in writing.
- The school's excellent links with external organisations ensure your well-being.
- Your headteacher works well with the deputy headteacher to make sure the school is well lead and staff are working together to help you learn.

I have asked Mr Rodgers and your teachers to make a few improvements by:

- making sure that work is not too easy for pupils who are good at mathematics and that lessons move at a faster pace
- involving other staff with management responsibilities in checking the quality of teaching and the effect that new methods of teaching are having.

You can contribute to improvements by making sure you learn your tables and work on your problem-solving and calculation skills.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe

Lead inspector