

Edward the Elder Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135318
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	329076
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	202
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	William Jones
Headteacher	Nick Cunliffe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Moathouse Lane East Wednesfield Wolverhampton WV11 3DB
Telephone number	01902 558765
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Edward the Elder Primary is a smaller than average school. It opened in January 2008 with the pupils from two schools that had closed. Half of the pupils are from White British families, one quarter are of Indian heritage and the remainder are from a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English at home as their first language is above the national average. Very few of them are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a part-time Nursery and a Reception class. The on-site Edward the Elder breakfast- and after-school clubs are managed by the governing body.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Edward the Elder Primary is a satisfactory school. Although standards are below average, achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make satisfactory progress. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school has successfully integrated the pupils from their previous schools to become a harmonious and thriving community in which standards are improving. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the new school and many made very positive comments about the merger. One summarises their views in writing, 'The school has coped with the upheavals very well and has emerged as a very happy school in which my child is making good progress.'

Pupils feel very safe in school and enjoy their lessons, participating in clubs and meeting their friends. They behave well and are polite to adults and to each other. Pupils are growing into confident and mature young people and their personal development is good.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are signs that it is improving. Teachers make lessons interesting and pupils are keen to learn. Teachers use resources well to engage pupils and develop their learning. However, the challenge teachers provide for higher attaining pupils is not consistently demanding enough to stretch them and accelerate their progress. The progress of children in the Nursery and Reception sometimes slows because the guidance they get about what they must do in the activities they choose outdoors is not always clear enough.

The satisfactory curriculum provides many educational visits, sports and other clubs that broaden pupils' experiences and add to their enjoyment of school. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff use their detailed knowledge of each pupil expertly to provide a good standard of pastoral care. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who do not speak English at home as their first language receive sympathetic support enabling them to make similar progress to their peers. The Edward the Elder breakfast- and after-school clubs both provide a safe and secure family atmosphere for children and pupils. The school uses outside agencies well to promote pupils' welfare and learning. For example, the school's effective partnership with the education welfare officer is rapidly improving the attendance of the small number of pupils who do not come to school regularly enough. The academic guidance provided to pupils on how they can improve their work is satisfactory.

Staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's unrelenting drive to improve the school. Subject leaders are working hard to raise standards but many are new in post and are not yet taking full responsibility for ensuring progress is consistently good in the area for which they are accountable. Because of this, leadership and management are satisfactory. The record of improvement since the school opened shows it has a satisfactory capacity to get better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with skills and experiences below those levels typically expected. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes to reach standards that are nearer to, although still below, average by the time they start Year 1. Their progress is improving especially in speaking, listening, reading and writing, where it is now good. Children's personal development is also good. They enjoy school, behave well and try hard. They show respect for each other and adults and are keen to support one another. Children are very well cared for and kept very safe. Parents are rightly pleased with the induction arrangements that

ensure children settle quickly into school and with the feedback teachers provide on their child's progress at the start and end of the day. However, there are too few opportunities for parents to participate in their child's learning by joining them in lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are clear signs that it is improving. For example, the daily sessions that help children link letters with the sounds they make is accelerating progress in reading. Teachers plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities for pupils to learn, explore and gain independence. However, the guidance given to children about what they need to do when they choose to work outdoors is not consistently clear enough to accelerate their progress. The satisfactory leadership provides effective training for staff to improve their Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills. While assessment is improving, it is still not frequent enough in all the areas of learning, which means staff are not always able to plan the next steps in children's learning in precise detail.

The Edward the Elder pre- and after-school clubs leaders are beginning to work closely with Early Years Foundation Stage teachers to ensure that the activities they provide for children make a valuable contribution to their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consistently provide higher-attaining pupils with a demanding level of challenge to stretch them and accelerate their progress.
- Improve the guidance given to children in the Reception class on what they need to do in their chosen activities outdoors to quicken their rate of progress.
- Ensure subject leaders take full responsibility for ensuring consistently good progress in the areas for which they are accountable.

A small proportion of the schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Children enter school with skills and knowledge below those levels expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception to reach below average standards by the time they start Year 1. Progress is variable in Years 1 to 6. It is good in Years 2 and 5, where teaching consistently stretches higher-attaining pupils, and satisfactory in other years. Pupils reach standards that are below average by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.

Progress is accelerating and standards are rising quickly in reading because pupils' skills at linking letters to their sounds is rapidly improving and pupils better understand the meaning of the text they read. This is improving their spelling too. Punctuation is largely accurate but pupils' ability to express their ideas clearly in longer pieces of written work is a relative weakness. The speed of pupils' mental arithmetic, which was too slow last year, has improved significantly. The school recognises that pupils still make too many mistakes when they apply their knowledge of mathematics to solve problems. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and science are improving, although they are still below average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this supports their good behaviour. Occasionally they lose concentration and fidget towards the end of a lesson. Pupils cooperate well in teams and have a good understanding of the diversity of British culture and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils feel very safe because the school deals with the rare cases of bullying promptly and effectively. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example on the internet. They understand the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and most do their best to eat a balanced diet and take plenty of exercise. Pupils have a good understanding of the changes that happen to them as they grow up and of the dangers of smoking and drug abuse. They really enjoy all aspects of school and most of them attend very regularly. Attendance is average because a small number of pupils do not come to school often enough. The school is working hard with their families to secure their good attendance. Children and pupils really enjoy the exciting activities they undertake in the Edward the Elder breakfast- and after-school clubs. Pupils readily take responsibility as monitors and as members of the school council. They are proud of the way they have helped to choose new equipment for the play area. Pupils generously collect for charity and regularly take part in local events. While pupils have positive attitudes, their standards are below average and this means their preparation for secondary school and future employment is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In lessons, relationships are positive. Pupils often make good progress when they discuss and clarify their ideas in pairs. Although teaching is improving, it is still satisfactory rather than good because the work teachers plan for more able pupils does not always match their needs closely enough to quicken their progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum supports aspects of personal development well. For example, during the inspection Year 5 had good opportunities in circle time to reflect on their feelings when they face change. Educational visits extend pupils' experience well. Year 1 learned much about history during their recent visit to a toy museum and talked excitedly about making 'peg dolls' and seeing 'Punch and Judy'. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and to sing. The school recognises that pupils need more opportunity to practise writing longer pieces of work in subjects other than English and to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils confidently share their concerns with adults because they know their worries will be effectively resolved. The assessments of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities and those at the early stages of acquiring English are accurate and used appropriately to provide them with personal learning programmes that closely match their needs. The Edward the Elder breakfast- and after-school clubs look after children and pupils very well and provide them with an appealing range of healthy snacks. Health and safety and safeguarding procedures and the checks on the suitability of staff to work with children are rigorous and regularly updated.

In many lessons, pupils receive very clear guidance as to how to make their work better. Elsewhere, feedback is supportive but not always detailed enough to show pupils how they can make improvements to their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation provide the school with a largely accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development and the school has appropriate priorities for improvement. Although it is still too early to judge the effectiveness of some plans, many are already proving successful. For example, the programme to improve reading by ensuring pupils accurately link letters to the sound they make and understand the meaning of text has improved standards in reading.

Subject leaders are beginning to check standards in their areas and plan improvements. For instance, the mathematics leader has helped staff sharpen their skills for teaching problem solving. However, many are recent appointments and are not yet taking full responsibility for accelerating progress and raising standards in their areas.

The school carefully checks the progress of pupils towards their challenging targets. If their progress slows, it provides them with appropriate extra help so that they can catch up on missed work. The school is a well-integrated community and has a good number of links with the local community. Community cohesion is satisfactory because international links are not yet fully established. The governors support the school well and work hard on its behalf. They are beginning to hold the school to account over the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edward the Elder Primary School, Wolverhampton WV11 4BD

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. I especially liked listening to Year 6 talking about how children might have felt when they were evacuated during the Second World War. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think Edward the Elder is a satisfactory school and that it is improving. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a satisfactory start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Satisfactory teaching helps you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.
- Standards are below average in English, mathematics and science.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- Your behaviour is good and most of you attend very regularly.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers keep those of you who find learning easier working hard, so that you make better progress.
- Tell children in the Nursery and Reception what they need to do in the activities they choose outdoors so that they too make better progress.
- Make sure the headteacher gets plenty of help from the other leaders to improve your learning in different subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well, trying your best in lessons and attending very regularly.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector