

Eckington CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116806
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	395617
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	David Evans

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Snaith
Headteacher	Gail Whiting
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
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Age group	5–10
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Evans

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed five teachers and seven lessons, which constituted four hours of inspection time. One of the lessons was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made short visits to a few sessions where support is provided by teaching assistants and one assembly. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and school staff, including senior and middle managers. Parents and carers were met informally during the inspection. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation including samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, self-evaluation and school improvement planning, curriculum and safeguarding documentation. In addition, the inspector took account of responses to questionnaires from 43 parents and carers, 10 staff and 89 pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized Church of England first school serving the rural village of Eckington and the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below that found in most schools; however the proportion supported with school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is higher. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school gained the Active Mark 2007, the Healthy School award and the Healthy School Enhancement in 2010, the Bronze Eco award and International School Intermediate Award.

Each year, the school operates a mixed-age organisation in two of its classes. This year, Reception and Year 1 pupils and those in Years 4 and 5 have been together, but this can change from year to year.

There have been significant staff changes in the last three years.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching and learning are not yet consistently outstanding. The good standards of education have been maintained over time and pupils enjoy learning.
- Achievement is good and all groups of pupils make good progress. When pupils leave school at the end of Year 5, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress.
- Teaching is good, and some is outstanding. The teaching of linking letters and sounds (phonics) is good and there is a secure approach to encouraging improved reading. In a few lessons, teachers do not provide all pupils with sufficient challenge, especially the higher-attaining pupils.
- Behaviour around the school is good and teachers ensure good behaviour in lessons through high expectations and consistently applying the school systems of sanctions and rewards. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are taught how to keep safe and healthy.
- Senior leaders have a clear vision for improving the school. They manage staff performance and the quality of teaching effectively through pupils' progress meetings, lesson observations and assessment data. A strong leadership team is ensuring that the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment, especially that of the higher attaining pupils, and achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers make more consistent use of what they know about pupils' prior learning in order to set them work which challenges them throughout the lesson

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- sharing with all teachers examples of the outstanding practice that already exists in the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Reception Year with knowledge, skills and understanding that are at the levels expected for their age. They make good progress, especially in their language and social development. Children particularly enjoy the opportunities they have for first-hand experiences, for example, as they made their preparations for the Diamond Jubilee. Children's learning and progress are closely monitored and they are helped to learn by the wide range of resources both indoors and outdoors. Their emotional development is well supported by caring staff.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Assessments in reading show that pupils are making good progress and a key factor is the care taken by staff to match books to pupils' reading levels. As a result, pupils read with confidence and fluency in Years 1 and 2, and attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. In Years 3 to 5, pupils continue to make good progress in English and mathematics, and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average by the time pupils leave the school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make at least good progress from their individual starting points through a wide range of support strategies. There are no marked differences in the attainment of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not.

Pupils enjoy their learning, as was seen in a Year 1 mathematics lesson where pupils eagerly placed numbers in order on a ladder and challenged each other. This activity helped to make mathematics fun and had a good impact on their spiritual development as they discovered the power of place value. Lessons are typically carried out at a good pace, with stimulating activities which promote good progress. In a Year 4/5 history lesson about people's reactions to The Queen's Coronation in 1953, brisk, short questions were asked as part of maintaining the good pace. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are always fully integrated into activities. Most parents and carers say their children are making good progress and developing good academic skills and the inspection findings corroborate these views.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and make learning enjoyable. They plan their lessons well and use a good range of teaching styles and activities to motivate learning. Teachers are consistent in providing opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation

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Stage. This is reinforced by strong teaching in phonics so that pupils use well their awareness of the sounds that letters make as they work out unfamiliar words within the text. Teachers also provide realistic links to other subjects and to the community, for example by participating in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and visiting the local area. There are good opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well and benefit from carefully targeted support. Teachers mostly use assessment data appropriately, but do not always provide sufficiently challenging tasks for all groups of pupils. This sometimes prevents even better strides in pupils' learning, especially for higher attainers. Teaching assistants are well trained to support pupils' needs and provide good support both in the classroom and during small group work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide constructive comments on how they can improve further.

Teachers use themes and practical activities to extend and develop pupils' basic skills well. Teaching has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through learning about other faiths and cultures as well as giving them an understanding of the arts. In many lessons, displays of pupils' stimulating art work are used effectively to create a purposeful atmosphere. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have good opportunities to choose the activities to work on. Teachers are good role models and have high expectations of pupils' academic and social development. The vast majority of pupils and almost all parents and carers who completed questionnaires say teaching is good. This is consistent with the inspection's findings.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The pupils' above-average attendance, enjoyment of school and good behaviour all contribute extremely well to their good progress. The ethos of the school is caring and seeks to foster a culture of respect for others. Pupils show consideration when learning and socialising together. They take turns, share equipment and help each other with their work. Older pupils take on responsibility readily, acting as buddies and play leaders to support younger pupils, which they say they really enjoy. Pupils understand that expectations of their behaviour are high and are clear about the consequences of any unacceptable behaviour, as well as its impact on others. Teachers are consistent in their management of behaviour and records confirm that behaviour is good over time. Most parents and carers endorse this view of typical behaviour.

Most parents and carers say that their children feel safe at school and pupils confirmed this when they met with the inspector. Pupils understand that bullying has different types and say that bullying in any form is at a low level. They know what to do if they are concerned and say that any incidents are dealt with quickly by staff. Older pupils are able to assess risky situations and understand how to take actions to minimise risk, for example when using the computer.

Adults provide positive role models for pupils and insist on good manners and

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courtesy at all times. Staff ensure that pupils move safely and calmly around the school. A good range of play equipment is available at playtimes for pupils who wish to be active and there is a quieter area with seating for those who would rather sit and chat.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Leaders have had notable success in maintaining and building on the strengths identified in the last inspection. Achievement, behaviour and teaching are good and, together with accurate self-evaluation, this shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement. The headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body, who share the same vision for raising attainment and improving the school. Staff questionnaires show that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the leaders and all aspects of the school.

Promoting equality and tackling discrimination are given high priority by leaders. As a result, all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are fully included in the life of the school. Members of the governing body and staff ensure that effective procedures to safeguard pupils are in place and that government requirements are met.

The school development plan includes relevant, key priorities, quantifiable targets and success measures. All systems to support school improvement are effective and the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is well established. Staff performance is managed well and staff value the provision made for their professional development. Training and support are targeted effectively where improvements are needed and this has had a positive impact on improving the quality of pupils' writing. The school is aware of the importance of sharing the best practice in teaching among all staff.

The governing body is well led and provides good support and challenge to the school. Members of the governing body are involved in monitoring progress and most are regular visitors to school. They are provided with a good range of information, including that from staff, about the school's performance and the impact of new initiatives. They use this to ask challenging questions which support the school's drive for improvement.

The balanced, well-planned curriculum is underpinned by the school's ethos. It meets the diverse needs of pupils successfully and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness strongly. Pupils say they enjoy the wide range of clubs and activities available to them and they are well attended. The curriculum is adapted well to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as providing opportunities for the specific gifts and talents of pupils.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Eckington CofE First School, Eckington, WR10 3AU

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and looking at the work you do. Your school provides you with a good education.

There are things your school does particularly well, and these are a few of them.

- You make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- You behave well and enjoy the opportunities for being rewarded for good behaviour.
- You get on well together and enjoy coming to school, where you feel safe.
- You tell us that any type of bullying is very rare and dealt with quickly and successfully.
- School leaders are ensuring that the school improves.

For the school to become better, we have asked your headteacher to:

- help you reach higher attainment levels by ensuring that teachers set you work which always challenges you at the right level.

All of you can help the school to move forward by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Evans
Lead inspector

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