

Edenbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118554
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	291168
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Brenda Spencer

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 on roll	
School	392
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	C R Cain
Headteacher	Rosemary Addison
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2002
School address	High Street Edenbridge TN8 5AB
Telephone number	01732 863787
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Edenbridge is a large primary school with a Nursery class. The school is designated to become a children's centre in September 2008. Extended provision includes a recently established breakfast club and out-of-school care. Most pupils are White British. 10% of pupils come from seven other ethnic groups, the largest group being Gypsy/Roma and Travellers of Irish heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is much higher than the national average. There are 11 looked after children. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Edenbridge Primary provides a satisfactory education and is an improving school. The headteacher gives clear leadership. She has developed aims for the school with staff, pupils and governors and put in place planning to raise standards, improve pupils' achievement and reach financial stability. The headteacher has made some difficult decisions and these have not always been welcomed by some staff or parents. Nevertheless, the benefits of the changes brought about have meant that financial stability is secured and progress has been good for very many pupils. This has already had a positive impact on standards in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The improvement in standards is not yet evident for older pupils because of the legacy of previous underachievement. Consequently, standards remain low although pupils are now achieving satisfactorily.

Children enter school with poor communication and social skills. Standards improve but remain below average at the end of Reception. They are just below average in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 but children's writing remains well below average. By the end of Year 6, standards are well below average in English and science and below average in mathematics. Teaching, the curriculum and the academic guidance pupils receive are satisfactory but uneven in quality. This, together with their attendance record, affects the rates of some pupils' progress. There are pockets of stimulating and excellent practice but also some which is uninteresting or imprecise in helping pupils find the ways to improve. In Key Stage 2, sometimes lessons are not well enough matched to pupils' abilities. All of this affects how much pupils enjoy school. The headteacher monitors the classes affected on a weekly basis and gives relevant advice and targets to bring about the required improvements. The incidents of unsatisfactory teaching and learning have fallen dramatically as a result.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some coordinators are making a good contribution to raising standards and achievement. However, science has not been a major focus of school development and despite recent revision of the curriculum standards have fallen. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in its work. There are rigorous systems to monitor the impact of the school's initiatives. The quality of teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour are kept under regular review and improvements have been made. Teaching assistants have been deployed well to give pupils falling behind the necessary support, consequently the pupils are now catching up and achieving well. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are satisfactory and their pastoral needs are well provided for, resulting in satisfactory personal development and well-being. The school makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils' diverse needs and to raise the quality of its work. For example, the local authority has contributed to developing the Foundation Stage so that quality and standards are satisfactory and improving. The school is making increasing inroads into achieving its aim of giving 'every individual child a chance to develop their talents, whatever they may be'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and science by strengthening the breadth and challenge of the curriculum.
- Ensure marking gives pupils specific advice on how to improve their work.
- Eliminate unevenness in the quality of teaching and learning so that lessons are consistently challenging and stimulating.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although pupils are now making satisfactory progress, the school recognises that standards are too low, especially in Key Stage 2, because, in previous years, pupils did not make enough progress. Children enter school with standards well below average, particularly in communication skills. By the end of the Nursery and Reception Years, standards in the past have been below average. National assessment results over a number of years, including 2006, show pupils attained standards significantly below average at Key Stages 1 and 2.

Because the quality of teaching is uneven, pupils make progress at differing rates across the school. This is being tackled successfully. Recent improvements, in teaching and learning, curriculum and the support for pupils who are struggling to make reasonable progress, are having a positive effect. Standards are rising and the vast majority of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Very many are making good progress. Many more children than in recent years are on track to reach the standards expected of them, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Children in Nursery and Reception are reaching standards that are below those expected of their age but higher than in previous years. Standards in reading and mathematics have risen and are approaching average at the end of Year 2. Pupils' writing remains relatively weak. Despite good teaching, pupils in Year 6 still have further to go to catch up on previously lost ground from years in which their progress was poor. Standards are very low in English and below average in mathematics. Standards have fallen significantly in science as the school has focused its work on raising skills in literacy and numeracy. The science curriculum has since been revised to ensure there are no gaps in pupils' learning and their investigation skills are strengthened.

Similar progress is made by different groups of pupils. However, some pupils' progress is negatively affected by poor attendance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some notable strengths. Moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with spiritual development being satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory, although it ranges from a few pupils displaying antisocial behaviour to some whose behaviour is exemplary. Concerted efforts have helped improve attendance recently, which apart from a small group of pupils, is close to the national average. Most pupils enjoy their time in school. Some express particular appreciation for the 'great things we do', but others do not have the same quality of teaching and curriculum and so are less motivated to learn. Most pupils eat healthily at break and lunchtimes. They appreciate the value of exercise, as seen in the popularity of sport in the after-school clubs. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that they can approach teachers if they have problems. They make a good contribution to school and the local community and raise funds for charity. They influence improvements in the school through the democratically elected school council, even by interviewing for a teaching post. Development of workplace skills is slow because of low literacy and numeracy skills, but does benefit from pupils' good social skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but this is a recent picture. The school acknowledges that the quality of teaching remains uneven but is improving significantly in response to rigorous monitoring and professional development. The vast majority of pupils are making at least satisfactory progress because the purpose of lessons is clear. Use of targets for learning in literacy and numeracy to meet the needs of the range of pupils' abilities is promoting better rates of progress. The role of teaching assistants has been redefined. They are making a very constructive contribution to learning in lessons and to aiding groups and individuals who need learning support. Examples were seen of teaching promoting good links with home learning through diaries.

However, teaching is not of the consistently good quality needed to help pupils to build quickly on relatively weak starting points. Marking too rarely gives pupils constructive advice on how to improve or what to recognise as good work, particularly in writing and science. The pace and match of work to pupils' abilities is not always right, particularly in some classes in Key Stage 2. Some learning is pedestrian because of uninspired use of worksheets, especially when these involve rehearsing skills such as spelling or writing without making links with learning across the curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Some aspects are developing well, but there are some inconsistencies in what pupils experience. Good work has greatly improved the Foundation Stage, giving children a balance of adult-led and self-chosen activities. Pupils make links well between their work in literacy and other subjects, but they are less aware of the contribution of numeracy to other subjects. Pupils' books indicate there is not enough depth of learning in some subjects. The use of volunteers to support individual learning is potentially useful, but at present this does not always exploit the links with work going on in the classroom, for example by reading similar non-fiction books. The school organises creative days and weeks on particular topics and, even after some time, pupils recall vividly what they did and learned. A good feature is the way the children learn about different cultures, for example Travellers and by linking with a school in St Lucia. A majority of pupils benefit from the good range of extra-curricular activities offered. There are also good specialist facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), art, drama and design and technology. These support the school in meeting the range of pupils' talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care, guidance and support provided for pupils are satisfactory. The school has appropriate procedures in place to ensure that children are cared for by appropriate adults and are kept safe. Pupils have a wide range of needs identified by the school, such as learning, social, physical and emotional. These pupils are well supported by teachers and outside agencies, and particularly by well trained teaching assistants.

Very good systems have been introduced over the past year to track the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is used well to give pupils appropriate support and guidance to improve through setting challenging targets. However, the quality of marking and teachers' assessment is not consistently good enough to ensure all pupils progress well and know how to improve their work. The family learning project to develop parents' knowledge of letters and sounds is beneficial to pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. There is very strong leadership by the headteacher, and she is well supported by a strong leadership team. She has successfully raised the awareness of staff and governors regarding the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong drive to raise standards, promote the personal development and well-being of pupils and keep the school on a sound financial footing. The headteacher has not been afraid to take difficult decisions for the benefit of the school, even though they have been unpopular with some. The leadership roles of subject coordinators are strong in English, mathematics and ICT. In science, less has been done and standards have suffered accordingly. Important strides have been taken to track pupils' academic progress, enabling intervention programmes to be put in place where necessary. Positive action is taken, sometimes with help from external agencies, to ensure that learners with difficulties or disabilities are able to take a full part in the life of the school. The school's self-evaluation is effective, monitoring is rigorous and the school development plan accurately prioritises the key aspects to improve. However, it is too soon to see the full benefit on academic standards and the ironing out of all inconsistencies in provision. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, and both challenge and support its work. Standards in reading and mathematics have improved already, as have the provision and standards in Foundation Stage. The ambition of the staff and governors for the pupils and the clear understanding of how the school needs to improve further mean the school has a good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

¹ 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

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Edenbridge Primary School, Edenbridge, TN8 5AB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you. A particular thank you must go to those of you from the school council who gave up your time to tell us your views at lunchtime.

We think Edenbridge is giving you a satisfactory education, and it is improving because staff are working hard to check that what they are doing is helping you to learn. You are cared for well and many of you said you felt safe in school. The teaching, curriculum and how you are looked after and helped to improve your work are all satisfactory. The school is being led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher and governors have a good plan to make sure the school and your learning become much better in the future.

Very many of you have been making good progress in the last year and you are learning important things about keeping safe, being healthy and making a contribution to the school and the local community. Keep up this good work to help the school achieve all the things it aims to do for you. Standards in English and science are low but could be improved. Some lessons give everyone something to think hard about and are really interesting but this is not always the case. We have asked teachers to plan work which really challenges you all and covers all the interesting aspects of your learning. We have also asked your teachers to give you good advice on what to do to improve when they mark your work. The success of this depends on whether you act on the good advice you get. We hope you will feel a great sense of satisfaction as you appreciate the progress you make.

Please thank your parents for kindly sending in the questionnaires and letters. These helped us to understand how well the school is doing.

Yours faithfully

Brenda Spencer Lead inspector