



Eaton Mill Combined School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110262
LEA Milton Keynes LEA
Inspection number 278395
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 9 December 2005
Reporting inspector Vanessa Ward AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Saffron Street
School category	Community		Bletchley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Milton Keynes MK2 3AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 373621
Number on roll	257	Fax number	01908 367324
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Russell Mayes
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr Warren Harrison

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Most of the pupils come from white British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A very small number of pupils is at the early stages of learning English. Most of the pupils live in areas of social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is average. More pupils than usual join the school other than at the start of the Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is higher than in many schools. The school has achieved an Active Mark for sports, a bronze Healthy Schools Award, a Quality Mark 2 and Investors in People status. Almost all of the teachers have been appointed in the last two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory and improving. It is close to being good, which is the school's current self-evaluation of its effectiveness. The new staff team is working together effectively to raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and in the accuracy of teachers' assessments. One consequence of this is that the more able pupils do not do as well as they should. The school provides good care and support for its pupils. This enriches their personal development and ensures that they feel safe and happy. Their behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to learning. Links with external agencies are used well to benefit the pupils' development. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and the headteacher is very clear about what needs to be done to improve achievement. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of clubs, educational visits and visitors to the school. However, there are too few links between subjects. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of provision and standards are satisfactory. The issues raised at the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. Recent improvements, and the commitment of staff to support necessary change, indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science, the school should focus on: * Improving the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good * Ensuring assessments are accurate and more able pupils are challenged * Improving the curriculum by increasing the links between subjects

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory and is improving. More children than usual enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are less well developed than those of most four-year-olds. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage and from Years 1 to 6. National test results in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 have risen successively for two years. However, standards remain below average. Strategies to raise standards in reading have been successful and, in 2005, test results improved. The current focus on improving writing is beginning to take effect. The setting of challenging targets and the tracking of progress towards them, followed by the provision of additional support, is contributing to the improving achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make satisfactory progress. When they work in small groups they often make good progress. The school has recently identified its most able pupils and is beginning to take steps to raise their achievement by providing greater challenge. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language, is

satisfactory. There is no discernible difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the previous inspection and are average. The standards of spoken French, achieved by pupils in Year 4, are as high as those normally found in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. They look forward to coming to school and enjoy their learning. This is reflected in the improved attendance figures which are now broadly average. One boy explained how much he valued and enjoyed opportunities to be creative. He said 'I enjoy art work because I can make things from different materials'. Pupils feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is good, and strong emphasis is placed on developing social and moral skills. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to learning, and supports their self esteem and confidence. Spiritual and cultural provision is satisfactory, and is promoted through the curriculum, visits to places of worship and by visitors to school. However more could be done to raise pupils' awareness of their own and others' beliefs. For example, insufficient use is made of display around the school to enrich pupils' cultural development. The school council plays an important role in enabling children's voices to be heard across all age groups. They speak proudly of the friendship post they introduced in the playground to support pupils who need a friend to play with. Pupils speak confidently about how food and exercise contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Activities, such as visits to an old people's home, help pupils to understand how they can make an effective contribution to their community. Pupils take personal responsibility for their own well-being because they are successfully encouraged to make decisions. Their future economic well-being is effectively enhanced by the many good opportunities for team work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, with some good elements. However, approaches to teaching and learning are not yet consistent because of the many staff changes. Where teaching is good, the lesson activities successfully interest the pupils. In a lesson where pupils were writing lines for a poem, the teacher's use of deliberate mistakes captured the pupils' interest and encouraged them to concentrate well. In a few lessons, pupils are given mundane tasks to complete and the teacher's questioning does not help the pupils develop their reasoning skills. A particularly noteworthy feature is the use made of specialist teaching. For example, teachers in Year 6 swap classes for lessons in art and PE, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit greatly from very skilled teaching during French lessons. In all classes, skilled teaching assistants give good quality help to groups of pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. They make sure that these pupils are fully integrated into all activities and contribute well during lessons. Most pupils learn at a satisfactory rate. However, the

more able pupils are not always challenged enough and some of them say they find the work too easy. The teachers' assessments of the pupils' work are not always as accurate as they should be. This means that the work the teachers plan is sometimes not matched well enough to pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a wide range of activities for its pupils. The school has rightly focused on developing pupils' skills in English, mathematics and science. However, its curriculum plans do not support this development as well as they could because they do not place enough emphasis on making links between subjects. Provision is satisfactory for pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language. The school has recently identified its most able pupils, but has yet to devise and implement a programme of learning to meet the particular needs of these pupils. The curriculum is enhanced through a range of out-of-class activities. For example, a visit by two poets enthused pupils, and was used as the basis for interesting literacy lessons. The school effectively promotes understanding of how to stay safe and healthy through work in science, physical education and personal, social and health education. It makes satisfactory provision for the learning of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and parents say 'The teaching staff are always friendly and there is a lovely atmosphere in the school'. Strategies to monitor personal development are effective. However, the guidance given to pupils regarding their academic progress does not involve them as well as it should. The well-being of pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language is monitored well. Individual pupil's achievements are celebrated and this raises their self-esteem. Health and safety procedures and regular risk assessments ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Good links with other agencies, such as the school nurse, enable the needs of pupils to be met well. Child protection procedures are in place and are well understood by staff. Pupils are confident that any cases of bullying will be dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils' views are surveyed through questionnaires and discussions, and issues are acted upon.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy and senior teachers, has a clear vision for school improvement. He has implemented several initiatives during the past three years and these are improving standards. The headteacher involves staff, governors, parents and pupils in self-evaluation. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and its capacity to improve is good. Teachers are

given useful feedback to help improve their teaching. The professional development of all staff is given high priority and they speak positively about its impact on their teaching. The subject leaders' involvement in, and influence over, teaching and learning in their subjects is developing well. For example, the subject leader for English has monitored the teachers' assessment of their pupils' writing. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities and is supportive of the school. Governors have been closely involved in such initiatives as securing the provision of the new nursery. The school strongly encourages parents to play an active role in their children's education. Parents appreciate the attention given by the school to their children's needs. The fabric of the building and the resources for the pupils have been improved substantially since the previous inspection, and this has enriched curricular provision through, for example, the library and the ICT suite.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we visited your school recently for two days. I am writing to you, on behalf of the inspectors, to tell you what we found out about your school. We spoke to some of you, and we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your school. It was very useful to listen to what you had to say about what you enjoy doing.

The things we think are good about your school are: * The way your headteacher and other grown ups look after you and help and support you as you grow. You told us that you feel safe and happy in school and that you know the grown ups will always help you if you are upset or worried* You have lots of interesting things to do in addition to your lessons. You told us that these make your learning enjoyable * This is a happy school and your parents and carers speak well of it* We noticed that you behave well and care for one another.

We think your school will improve further if your teachers help you to achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science by: * Making their teaching even better* Setting you challenging tasks that build on what you already know* Making more links between subjects; for example, helping you to develop your reading and writing skills in a history lesson. We hope you will carry on enjoying school and helping your teachers as much as you can.