

Eccleston CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111349
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	356896
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Howarth
Headteacher	Mrs Katie Wilkes
Date of previous school inspection	9 April 2008
School address	Eaton Road Eccleston, Chester Cheshire CH4 9HD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons and saw three teachers. Meetings were held with parents, carers, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress and improvement planning. They looked at school documentation including that relating to safeguarding and analysed 49 parental and 42 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether the achievement of pupils at both Key Stages, particularly in writing, is good enough, especially that of boys and the more able.
- Whether assessment information is used effectively enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils in mixed-age classes.
- Whether leadership and management at all levels is effective in sustaining recent improvements in attainment and progress.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than the average sized primary school. A large proportion of pupils comes to the school from an area wider than Ecclestone village. The vast majority is of White British heritage. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is low. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. The school has gone through a period of considerable instability with falling rolls and changes in staff since the last inspection in 2008. The school has recently gained an award for its music provision.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6 attainment in English and mathematics is above average and pupils make satisfactory progress from their above average levels of skill when starting in the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as that of their classmates as a result of the good support they receive. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their enthusiastic response in lessons, their outstanding behaviour and above average attendance.

Pupils' personal development and their contribution to the school and wider community are good. They willingly take on responsibility and are fully-involved in school decision-making through, for instance, the school council and acting as 'buddies' to younger children. Opportunities to work together to solve problems and to explain their ideas to one another prepare them well for the next stage in their education. However, pupils are not always entirely sure about how they are getting on or how to improve their work because marking, although encouraging, lacks detail.

Parents and carers value the good care, guidance and support the school provides for its pupils and the good partnerships the school has with them, which support their children's learning well.

After a period of considerable instability and changes in staff, there is now a much more settled picture. Teaching is more consistent, expectations are higher and more pupils are on track to reach or exceed expected targets. Teachers are beginning to measure progress more confidently and with greater accuracy. This enables them to build steadily on pupils' earlier achievements so that the majority of pupils now makes satisfactory progress and is now on track to meet, and some to exceed, their targets. This is largely as a result of the more rigorous use of assessment and monitoring of individual progress. However, this is not always translating effectively into lesson planning to meet the needs of different groups as effectively as it might. The recently introduced topic-based approach to the curriculum is proving successful in engaging pupils' interest but it is too early to see its impact upon their attainment and progress. However, subject leaders have not had enough opportunity to ensure that curriculum planning is secure in contributing to the developing pupils' skills and accelerating their progress. Self-evaluation is thorough and in the short time that she has been in post, the headteacher has accurately identified what needs to be done to eliminate the legacy of underachievement, to raise attainment further and to accelerate the progress pupils make. Gaps are closing rapidly and there is no longer a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Attendance has risen and is now above average. This improvement is an indication of the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. Members of the governing body are well-informed and provide a satisfactory level of support and challenge to the school.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in English and mathematics by:
 - improving the use of assessment information to ensure that, in lessons, the needs of all different groups of abilities are fully met
 - giving more detailed guidance to pupils so that they have a better understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve their work
 - ensuring that during all parts of the lesson, pupils are actively involved in their learning.
- Ensure that subject leaders can contribute fully to planning of the curriculum so that it supports pupils' learning and accelerates their progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Pupils are attentive and they work sensibly, particularly when sharing tasks with partners or when working in small groups to carry out investigations in science or to solve problems. They learn at a satisfactory pace in lessons but their performance is slowed when tasks are either too easy or too difficult for them. This is because teachers do not yet pinpoint precisely what each pupil needs to do next in order to make the best progress or the additional help they might need to succeed in tasks. For example, pupils who could write confidently, imaginatively and at length were only expected to correct spellings and punctuation in a whole class activity. Similarly, in a mathematics lesson, less-able pupils struggled to work out the value of angles in a triangle because they were unsure of how to set about the task.

The school's robust approach to establishing more accurate assessment and stronger teaching raised levels of attainment in 2010. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly identified and catered for through individual and small group support and make satisfactory progress. Additional support for pupils, who have fallen behind or have gaps in their learning, gives their learning an important boost and ensures satisfactory and sometimes good progress from their varying starting points. Pupils in Key Stage 1 now make satisfactory progress in their writing as a result of the introduction of the 'Big Write' which provides them with opportunities to practise their writing in a wider variety of contexts. However, more-able pupils do not always reach their full potential because opportunities are missed to challenge them in tasks set and less-able pupils' progress slows when they are not given sufficient support to succeed in tasks.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. Relationships are good. Pupils understand some of the dangers they may encounter outside school, look after one another in the playground, and are prepared well to make informed choices about their personal well-being. Pupils are fully aware of the need to eat sensibly and maintain levels of fitness. There is good attendance at after-school sports clubs. Pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities around the school and as school councillors. Pupils undertake joint projects with local schools. They take time to reflect on their actions, celebrate each other's

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achievements and look after younger pupils or those new to the school. Pupils' cultural knowledge and understanding is at present largely restricted to the immediate community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Activities are well-sequenced and engage pupils' interest well. As a result, pupils enjoy what they do. Pupils make the best progress when they work in pairs or small groups to solve problems and investigate ideas for themselves. Their progress slows when teacher-led activities are lengthy, pupils are not actively involved in their learning and they are not all directly involved in whole-class activities. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They know the pupils well and are sensitive to their particular learning needs. Relationships in lessons are very positive and pupils usually strive to do their best. However, at times, resources and activities do not match individual needs well enough so that pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult. Pupils generally know their broader targets but are not always made fully aware of the small steps they need to take towards achieving them.

Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well provided for and pupils benefit from specialist teaching in sports and music. Pupils' experiences are enhanced through an annual residential visit to Wales, visitors, musical events and clubs. Very effective links with partner schools not only enrich pupils' learning through a variety of

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workshops and activities which this very small school could not otherwise provide for its pupils, but also ensure they have common experiences with other children. This, in turn, smoothes their transition to high schools.

Parents and carers agree overwhelmingly that their children are well cared for in school. The most vulnerable pupils are very well cared for and nurtured well to ensure that they can learn alongside others. The school works effectively with other agencies to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The thorough analysis of the school's performance by the headteacher and deputy and the clear direction for development they provide are effective in helping to drive improvement and raise attainment. Close and accurate tracking of pupils' progress informs school self-evaluation and improvement planning well and triggers a variety of intervention strategies. Although subject leaders plan in relation to their own subjects, they do not, as yet, have an overview of the topic-based curriculum or plan in collaboration with each other. This means that opportunities are missed to develop basic skills.

The school's focus on individual needs demonstrates its good commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. The school meets government guidelines for safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff. Activities designed to improve children's understanding of how to stay safe are effective because they are part of the curriculum. Parents and carers are well-informed about events at the school through newsletters and the school website and value the meetings and reports they receive. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, for instance, through its links with the church but has yet to develop links beyond the immediate community. The governing body is very supportive and is beginning to challenge the school through regular systems to analyse and check pupils' progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception class. Behaviour is outstanding. Children respond positively to adults, play well with their classmates and display enjoyment in their learning. The majority joins the school with skills that are above those expected for their age. Most begin Year 1 as confident learners, well-equipped to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum with skills, particularly in reading and writing, which are above those expected. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Children learn effectively through a variety of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children's progress is monitored on a daily basis and this information is used effectively to record milestones and to plan next steps in adult-led activities which are well-planned and well-matched to children's needs. In these activities the teacher and teaching assistant take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and develop their speaking and listening skills. Children respond very positively, display enjoyment in activities and show pride and pleasure in their achievements. However, in activities they choose for themselves, particularly outdoors, activities sometimes lack focus and opportunities are missed to guide their learning effectively through play, with the result that their progress slows. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and overseen by the headteacher. Effective liaison with pre-school settings and good relationships with parents and carers enable children to settle quickly. Since Reception and Year 1 classes are taught together, children make a smooth transition from one stage to the next. Good levels of care and welfare are provided for the children to ensure their well-being.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

In terms of the number of questionnaires returned, the response was higher than for most inspections of primary schools. The vast majority of the parents and carers, who responded, expressed positive views of the school. Parents and carers value highly the work of the school in helping their children to be safe and happy. A very small minority said they would appreciate more guidance in supporting their children's learning. Although most parents and carers were happy with the progress their children make, the inspection found that there could be some improvement in the progress children make.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ecclestone CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	59	20	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	76	12	24	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	43	23	47	4	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	33	28	57	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	43	27	55	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	27	28	57	6	12	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	45	24	49	3	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	43	23	47	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	37	27	55	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	47	22	45	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	33	28	57	4	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	53	22	45	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	53	22	45	0	0	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



11 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eccleston C of E Primary School, Chester, CH4 9HD

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspectors for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you all and hearing what you had to say. You told us how much you enjoy your learning and how proud you are of your school. Your behaviour is excellent and we were very impressed by the way you help each other both in lessons and outside in the playground. You told us that the staff look after you well and we agree, the care you receive is good.

There have been a lot of changes since the last inspection. The staff are working hard to help you do your best in English and mathematics although we have asked the school to ensure that you achieve even higher standards. Your teachers make lessons interesting through the topics you are studying. Some of you told us you were not sure about how you are getting on or how to improve your work. We noticed that your work was marked regularly but did not always give you precise guidance about how to improve. We have asked the school to make sure that it does. We noticed how well you worked together to solve problems, for instance, in science and mathematics. We also noticed that some of you sometimes find work too easy, and some others of you find it too difficult, so we have asked the teachers to make sure you are all given the right amount of challenge in lessons so that you can do your best. Younger children in reception also enjoy their learning and make satisfactory progress.

The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better. Teachers in charge of different subjects plan your work carefully to ensure you are all making satisfactory progress, but need more opportunities to share their ideas and plan together so that they can ensure you get the most out of the topic work you do and make the best progress. We have asked the school to make this possible in order to help you make even better progress. I wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley

Lead Inspector

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