

Ebchester CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114214
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	378813
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Gibson
Headteacher	Dorothy Parry
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
School address	Shaw Lane Ebchester Consett DH8 0QB
Telephone number	01207 560349
Fax number	01207 560349
Email address	ebchester@durhamlearning.net

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nine lessons and five teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders were also considered through questionnaire responses from 35 parents and carers, six staff and 37 pupils.

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

- How effectively provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress.
- How effectively teaching and learning challenge the needs of pupils of differing abilities to secure good progress, particularly in mathematics and for those of higher ability.
- How successfully the school works with other partners to assure high quality support for pupils and their families, especially for those who are vulnerable.
- How successfully the monitoring and evaluation of all leaders and managers contribute to school self-evaluation and to the increase of challenge to improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

In this smaller than average-sized primary school, the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below that found nationally. There are few pupils from minority-ethnic backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special education needs, is higher than the national average. The school has high levels of mobility with a proportion of pupils leaving at the end of Year 4 and more entering the school at this stage. About half of the pupils who attend the school do so from outside the recognised catchment area.

The school is an Investor in Children and holds the UNICEF Rights Respecting (Level1) and International School (Intermediate) awards. It also has Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has great strengths in the outcomes for pupils and in the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. The school is praised by the majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires. They are greatly supportive of the school and tell of good progress and caring, approachable staff. One comment, reflective of many received, notes, 'This is a fantastic school which gives children a great environment to develop in and gives them a love of learning.' Pupils report that they really enjoy school and this is demonstrated in their good attendance. They feel extremely safe and their behaviour is excellent. They understand fully the rights of themselves and of others, making their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding excellent. Pupils work very conscientiously to fulfil their many roles and responsibilities for their school and beyond.

Overall, pupils make good progress from their broadly-expected starting points on entry to Reception. They reach above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and are motivated to achieve well. Good class management and good relationships with teachers engage pupils in learning. In the Reception class, children engage well. However, there are insufficient opportunities for them to investigate and problem-solve using their developing skills in reading, writing and number. Observations of children's learning are not used sufficiently well to determine what they need to learn next. In the rest of the school, teachers have a good understanding of the standards pupils reach and their needs are generally met. However, expectations sometimes lack appropriate challenge. Activities are not always well-matched to individual needs, especially in Key Stage 1 and for the more-able pupils, for whom progress is not as rapid. Marking is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with the information they need to understand how well they have done or what they need to learn next.

Under the experienced leadership of the headteacher, members of the governing body and other school leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to actions to improve outcomes. For example, a more creative curriculum is motivating pupils' learning and enabling them to make better use of their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across other subjects. The success of actions to improve the quality of writing and mathematics is visible in improving standards, and the proportion of persistent absentees has been successfully reduced. Clear priorities have been identified for further improvement and a suitable plan is in place to

achieve them. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement and given the outstanding outcomes for pupils it provides outstanding value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - developing the quality and range of child-initiated activities to provide greater individual challenge
 - using such activities to observe and record the progress children make in order to plan their next steps in learning.

- Further accelerate pupils' progress, and raise their attainment to higher levels, especially at Key Stage 1 and for the more able, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to be involved in investigative and problem-solving activities across other subjects, enabling them to develop and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics
 - using information about pupils' skills and abilities to plan work that is always well matched to the needs of individual pupils
 - using marking more effectively to help pupils know exactly how to improve their work and to understand their next learning challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well overall. In lessons they are keen to please their teachers and succeed in their tasks. They are eager to engage, answer questions enthusiastically and show good concentration and reflection. For example, in an English lesson, pupils shared reflective, and sometimes emotive, responses after considering ways to encourage men to join up to a fighting force after the outbreak of the Second World War.

Across the school, attainment in writing and mathematics is improving as a result of recent strategies to develop provision. There are greater opportunities for pupils, especially older ones, to write and use numeracy skills across other subjects. Pupils' progress over Key Stage 1 can be slower than that in Key Stage 2 because of lower expectation and challenge, in particular for the more able. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, make at least good progress because of the highly-effective strategies to support their individual learning needs and the excellent personal care, guidance and support they receive.

Pupils' attendance is above average and their behaviour is excellent. They show great respect to adults and demonstrate considerable maturity, reflecting on how actions beget consequences and also on the rights of others and themselves. Pupils feel very safe and are adamant that there is no bullying. They are extremely confident that, if they are worried, there is always a member of staff to turn to who will listen and help. Pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of others from different backgrounds and cultures. Through their numerous responsibilities, pupils are highly effective in their work within the school and the local community,

helping their friends, their school and members of the community through a variety of activities, for example, to develop the garden areas. Many pupils take advantage of additional activities to keep fit and healthy. This is supported by a good understanding of how to eat well and the potential dangers of substance abuse. Overall, pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall across the school. Teachers know pupils extremely well and plan lessons carefully to motivate interest and engagement. They extend pupils' skills and understanding effectively, checking pupils' learning to ensure lesson objectives are met. In less successful lessons, the pace of learning can slow because of insufficient challenge and lower expectations for individual pupils. Throughout the school, the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with recognition of their successes or of what they need to learn next. While there are growing opportunities for pupils to use their independent learning skills to investigate practical and open-ended activities, senior leaders rightly recognise that there is a need to extend these to all subjects. Overall, teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the level at which pupils are working and use assessments of pupils' attainment. However, they do not always plan well enough to address next steps in learning. The use of assessment data to inform planning is continually being refined to bring about improvements in pupils' attainment, such as in writing and mathematics.

Recent developments to the curriculum are providing greater opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across subjects. Pupils speak of lessons being more lively and engaging through a range of visits and visitors. These extend learning experiences and provide pupils with first-hand experiences upon which they can draw. The garden and woodland provide additional experiences for pupils to engage in environmental and

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

enterprise activities. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 pricked out seedlings and prepared beds for planting while others considered profit margins from the sale of their prospective plants. Older pupils speak enthusiastically of residential opportunities which increase their confidence and self-esteem, as they participate in new and challenging experiences.

Pupils speak highly and accurately of the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive, which is fully demonstrated in their personal outcomes. The highly-positive views of parents and carers fully support the excellent quality of pastoral care and other guidance pupils receive. External agencies work closely with pupils, staff and families to ensure that the needs of all pupils, but in particular those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are particularly well supported so they make equally good progress. The early identification of individual need, with appropriate and highly focused interventions, is central to this provision, enabling pupils with specific needs to make progress in line with their peers. Good lines of communication with parents and carers ensure that they understand how well their children are progressing and how they can support their learning effectively. Equally good links with secondary schools enable pupils to transfer confidently at the end of Year 6.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers, including members of the governing body, have a very clear understanding of the school and share a vision for further improvement. The development of the 'whole child' is central to the school's ethos and every effort is made to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and learn well. The headteacher leads by example and delegates areas of responsibility appropriately. Staff feel valued because they are fully included in making decisions about the future direction of the school. They use their increased skills from professional development to good effect in improving provision and outcomes. Good monitoring of teaching and learning contributes to effective learning overall. All leaders and managers contribute to the evaluation of school effectiveness and feel they have a part to play. Consequently, morale is very high. The governing body is proactive and works closely with senior leaders to determine the strategic direction of the school. It assures good practice in safeguarding within the school. Appropriate training and procedures are securely in place and fully meet requirements. Governance is good. Individual members of the governing body work effectively to improve their particular areas of responsibility and seek the views of parents and carers to inform future actions.

The school has well-developed partnerships with a wide range of organisations to support the curriculum, pupils' learning and their high quality care and guidance.

Staff ensure that all pupils are able to engage in every aspect of school life. They track the progress of all pupils carefully and endeavour to ensure that all pupils make similar progress. This has resulted in focused attention to particular areas of development, for instance in writing and mathematics, where improvements are clear. Overall, there is effective promotion of equal opportunities. The school promotes community cohesion well within the school and has good links with the local community. It has also developed effective links with other organisations both nationally and globally.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into this warm and friendly setting. Welfare requirements are well met and children's personal needs are a priority, ensuring that they are very well looked after. Children relate well to adults and are happy and confident, integrating well with each other. The majority of children enter Reception with skills largely in line with those typical for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are working towards the goals expected of them. This represents satisfactory progress overall.

Children demonstrate a preference to learn independently and particularly enjoy investigating and finding out things for themselves. Planning takes into account the needs and interests of children. However, some activities are insufficiently challenging and this can limit the progress some children make. Children are well behaved and want to please. On occasions, they can lose concentration when teacher-directed learning goes on for too long. The inside learning area is of good size and provides a range of different activities for children. However, there are limitations to the outside area and this hinders opportunities for children to use their developing skills in a different environment. Learning journals, at an early stage of development, record children's achievements satisfactorily. Adults note children's successes in learning but these are not systematically and concisely recorded from observations of what children say and do through independent play. Consequently, assessments lack the rigour and accuracy to ensure that abilities and needs are

quickly and precisely identified. Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving as expectations of what children can achieve are raised.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the school as evidenced in the high return. They greatly appreciate the care given to their children and are extremely confident that their children are happy and safe and that teachers meet their children’s needs well. Very few issues were raised by parents and carers and there was no obvious pattern to those raised. All were fully investigated and form part of the evidence base used to arrive at the inspection judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ebchester 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 inspector received 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 68 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	82	6	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	85	5	15	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	65	12	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	56	15	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	71	9	26	1	3	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)	19	56	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	68	11	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	59	13	38	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	53	14	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	68	10	29	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	79	7	21	0	0	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ebchester CofE Primary School, Consett, DH8 0QB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently.

You go to a good school. It has some outstanding features, including your excellent behaviour. We were very impressed by how well you respect and care for each other. You are polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you. We found that you really enjoy coming to school and that your attendance is good. You feel extremely safe because there is no bullying. You understand your rights and those of others extremely well and you use this information well in your roles of responsibility about the school.

Our thanks go to those of you who filled in the questionnaires. They gave us lots of information and we now know how much you, and your parents and carers, appreciate your school and the staff who work there. We found that adults in your school care exceptionally well for you and make sure that you always have someone to turn to when you have a problem. Their good links with others from outside the school make sure that all of your individual needs are met and you can learn without worrying. Your parents and carers know and appreciate this.

Teachers mostly make lessons enjoyable for you and you respond by working really hard. We would like children in Reception to learn within a wider range of activities so that staff can use observations of how well children succeed to provide more interesting and challenging tasks. For older pupils, especially those in Key Stage 1 and for those of you who are more able, we want teachers to plan activities well-matched to your individual needs, giving you more information about how well you have done and what you need to learn next. We would like you to have better opportunities for you to use your literacy and numeracy skills more independently in activities in which you have to investigate and solve problems.

We are sure you will continue to try hard.

Yours sincerely
Kate Pringle
Lead inspector

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