

# Ellison Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124188
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380827
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roger Machin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nichola Gibson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Ellison Street Wolstanton Newcastle ST5 0BL
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<b>Fax number</b>	01782 297687
<b>Email address</b>	office@ellison.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380827



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh Additional inspector

Denise Dalton Additional inspector

Jeremy Bird Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 25 lessons led by 12 of the school's teachers and five intervention sessions. Meetings were held with staff as well as with members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress and arrangements for safeguarding as well as other documents. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires from pupils.

## Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the vast majority speak English as their first language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2010 after a period of instability in the leadership of the school. The senior leadership team has been reorganised recently; a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2012 and a new assistant headteacher takes up post in April 2012. There has been a significant amount of staff absence and some classes have been taught by temporary staff. The school does not meet the current government floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school is not providing a satisfactory standard of education because there is significant underachievement due to inadequate teaching. In addition, the curriculum is not promoting basic skills effectively and it does not meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. A significant amount of staff absence contributes to pupils' underachievement and to slow rates of improvement.
- Achievement is inadequate. Although pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is too slow. Pupils make good progress in Year 6 but they have already fallen too far behind and are unable to close the gap with other pupils nationally. Consequently, pupils' attainment is below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress during their time in school.
- Teaching is inadequate because the work set is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs. Teachers do not do enough to check pupils' learning and pupils receive insufficient feedback about how to improve their work. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not have their needs met because staff have insufficient understanding of how to support these pupils effectively either in main classes or in small support groups.
- Most pupils behave appropriately in classes and around school and feel safe. They behave best in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in lessons in Year 6 because they are given challenging work and are fully engaged in their own learning.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers is inadequate. There is rigorous

monitoring and evaluation and the headteacher is clear about where improvements need to be made. However, the leadership team is new and there has been insufficient impact on outcomes for pupils. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are inadequate because, despite extensive professional development for staff, the quality of teaching is inadequate.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - improving the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) in Key Stage 1
  - improving the accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - ensuring that pupils produce a good amount of writing and have sufficient time to practise their skills
  - consistently implementing the school's calculation policy and ensuring that pupils complete a broad range of mathematical work.
- Boost the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by:
  - developing teachers' knowledge of disabilities and special educational needs
  - raising teachers' expectations of what disabled pupils and those with special educational needs can achieve
  - ensuring that support sessions are taught well and tailored carefully to pupils' needs
  - rigorously monitoring the progress of these pupils and robustly evaluating the impact of additional support.
- Eradicate inadequate teaching by:
  - making certain that teachers understand exactly what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson
  - making certain that work is carefully matched to pupils' needs
  - checking learning more frequently in lessons, including when pupils are working independently
  - ensuring that modelling, marking and target setting are used more effectively in order that pupils know exactly how to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - stabilising staffing so that there is greater continuity of provision for pupils
  - developing the skills of the new leadership team
  - improving the curriculum to develop pupils' basic skills.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Achievement is inadequate because pupils' progress in learning is too variable between, and within, different key stages. Children get off to a good start in the

Early Years Foundation Stage. When they start school most have many skills that are similar to those expected for their age although their skills in communication, language and literacy are below those expected. They make good progress in lessons because of good teaching, which is combined with a curriculum that is rich in opportunities to develop language and which promotes early reading and writing skills. Children develop a good understanding of phonics because they are taught well in small groups, and as the work is matched carefully to their needs. Parents are aware that their children are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but a few raised concerns about the rates of progress elsewhere.

Progress through Key Stage 1 is inadequate and by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 their attainment is below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The teaching of phonics is not having enough impact on developing pupils' reading and writing skills because little attempt is made to match the work to pupils' level of understanding. Additionally, staff do not always articulate letter sounds correctly. As a result some pupils struggle with reading and writing and have limited strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Although they are often able to recognise initial letter sounds, they are less proficient at recognising that groups of letters can combine to make different sounds. Progress in mathematics is inadequate because there is too much consolidation of previous learning rather than moving on to new topics.

Progress continues to be inadequate in Key Stage 2. Pupils' books contain too many pieces of unfinished work that reflect frequent changes of teacher, low expectations and insufficient time to practise their skills. Weaknesses in pupils' writing include inaccuracies in spelling and punctuation, and grammatical mistakes when constructing sentences. Additionally, pupils transfer their colloquial speech into their writing. In mathematics, pupils' ability to carry out basic calculations is not secure because staff do not always follow the school's calculation policy and the work set is too repetitive.

Pupils make good progress in Year 6. For example, in a well structured lesson about probability, pupils gained a good understanding of the mathematical elements of chance. However, despite accelerated progress in Year 6, attainment is below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make inadequate progress also. This is because their needs are not understood by class teachers and interventions have not been designed carefully enough.

### **Quality of teaching**

There is too much inadequate or satisfactory teaching and consequently pupils' progress is too slow. Teaching over time in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 to 5 is inadequate so that pupils fall behind and are unable to catch up in Year 6.

Parents and carers are rightly concerned about the lack of continuity in teaching and the frequent absence of staff. Absences and the use of supply staff have resulted in gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers have embraced the new more creative curriculum, and the pirate theme in Year 1 has been particularly successful in motivating pupils. However, in too many lessons teachers are not clear about what pupils are expected to learn and the work is not well matched to pupils'

needs. At times too little is required of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Learning is not always checked when pupils are working independently so teachers do not notice when children are not completing enough work or have misconceptions. Additionally, teachers do not always model important activities such as writing. Marking and target setting do not give pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve their work. During specific support sessions for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or those who find learning challenging, expectations are often not high enough and the pace of learning is too slow.

There are pockets of good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Parents and carers are full of praise for the good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they recognise that it is making certain that their children are enthusiastic about learning. Lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well organised and include the careful use of questioning. These factors, plus good-quality adult support, ensure that children are able to make good progress. Good teaching in Year 6 is particularly successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils in Year 6 were able to explore ideas and develop empathy for different characters when studying the book 'Kensuke's Kingdom'.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Appropriate expectations of standards of behaviour in and out of the classroom result in an orderly environment. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour in lessons. In the lessons visited by inspectors, behaviour was usually satisfactory and sometimes good. The school's records confirm that this is typical of behaviour over time. Many pupils want to do well but their concentration sometimes wanes when they are listening to over-long introductions to lessons. Pupils are aware that there are a small number of pupils whose behaviour can be challenging. The school manages these pupils appropriately and work hard to improve their behaviour.

Although most parents, carers and pupils have limited experience of bullying in school, a few are concerned about children arguing with one another and falling out of friendships. Pupils describe some name calling that usually relates to pupils' appearances. They say that teachers always help them by tackling the culprits and these issues are usually resolved fairly quickly. The headteacher has developed a particularly thorough system of recording the worries of parents, carers and pupils and the actions that have been taken in response to any concerns. Most parents agree that staff have created an environment where pupils feel safe and are aware of all types of bullying. The work of the home-school link worker has made a significant contribution to this. For example, the creation of small nurture groups help pupils to develop their social skills and to manage their own behaviour. The

school provides pupils with appropriate guidance about staying safe, including when using computers, or crossing the road. Levels of attendance are average and few pupils are absent from school regularly.

### **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders and managers, including governors, have not brought about sufficient improvement to the quality of provision, teaching, and to outcomes for pupils. They have not demonstrated sufficient capacity for improvement. The senior leadership team, although keen and enthusiastic, is very new and has not had time to make a significant difference to outcomes. The headteacher is very ambitious for the school and knows why many pupils are underachieving. For example, data is analysed and teacher performance is monitored regularly. School development planning pinpoints exactly where the school needs to improve but actions have not had enough impact on achievement.

Improvements in teaching have been adversely affected by staff absence. Extensive professional development for staff includes support from the local authority and visits to other schools to observe good and outstanding practice. However, teachers have not yet consistently put into practice external advice and too much teaching is still inadequate or satisfactory. The progress of individual pupils is tracked carefully so that those who are underachieving are identified to receive support. However, the quality of this support is too variable. Not enough has been done to analyse the progress of different groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or to assess the impact of intervention programmes. Consequently leaders and managers do not do enough to promote equality as they cannot be sure that every child reaches his or her full potential irrespective of their level of ability or background.

The school's safeguarding procedures are robust. Extensive training means that keeping children safe is a high priority for staff. The curriculum is inadequate. The school has introduced a creative curriculum that has improved pupils' enthusiasm for learning and ensured that the pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily. There is a good curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage but the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 does not promote the development of pupils' basic skills adequately.



## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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](http://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.
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.**



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Ellison Primary School, Newcastle, ST5 0BL**

Thank you for being so friendly when my colleagues and I visited your school. We felt very welcome. Your school is not providing you with a satisfactory standard of education and has been placed in 'special measures'. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is below that reached by other children in schools nationally. This is because you are not making enough progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.

We have asked teachers to improve your progress by helping you to understand better the links between groups of letters and sounds and making sure that you do not continue to make mistakes in your spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. We have also asked them to help you to develop your mathematical skills by providing a wider variety of work. We noticed that those of you who find learning difficult are also making slow progress so we have asked your teachers to improve their understanding of your needs and the quality of support sessions.

Although there are some good lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6 classes, teaching in your school is not good enough. Some of your teachers are often absent and some of you have had too many temporary staff. Teachers are not always clear about what you are expected to learn in lessons and do not check well enough on what you have learned. Sometimes work is too hard for you and occasionally it is too easy. We noticed that teachers do not always tell you how to improve your work and marking and the setting of targets could be done more effectively. We have asked your teachers to improve these aspects of their work.

Leaders and managers are working hard to improve your school but their efforts have not had enough impact on your achievement and the quality of teaching. Inspectors will come back soon to check that your school is improving. You can help by trying hard in all your lessons and by always finishing your work.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh  
Lead inspector

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