



# Edmondsley Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114001  
**LEA** Durham  
**Inspection number** 279293  
**Inspection dates** 12 July 2006 to 12 July 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Bennett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Front Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Edmondsley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Durham, County Durham
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0191 371 0443
<b>Number on roll</b>	165	<b>Fax number</b>	0191 371 0443
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Arthur Turner
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Eric Dodd

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other members of staff, the chair of governors and three parent governors and a group of pupils. He also spoke to teachers, pupils and classroom helpers while visiting lessons and at break times. He scrutinised a range of school documents and a sample of the pupils' work.

## Description of the school

Edmondsley is a smaller than average primary school in a former mining village. It is a popular school, with seven in ten of its pupils drawn from beyond the immediate area. Almost all pupils are from a White British background; none come from homes where English is spoken as an additional language. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

About one fifth of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including a few who have a statement of special educational need; these figures are about average compared with all primary schools. A similar proportion of pupils are entitled to a free school meal and this is slightly above the national figure. There is a high level of unemployment and some economic disadvantage in Edmondsley. In recent years, the school has won two School Achievement Awards, the Basic Skills Charter Mark 3, the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Edmondsley is an outstanding school in almost all respects. It would be hard to disagree with parents who describe it as 'awesome' and 'brilliant' or who comment that 'it has gone well over and above what I would have expected' and 'really, we couldn't ask for anything better.' The headteacher, described more than once as 'inspirational', knows the school can improve further and has an incisive view of how to bring this about. Above all, through the culture of care, success and celebration that his leadership has created in the school, he has the full confidence of other staff, parents and governors. In the words of a governor, 'the whole ethos of the school is to get the best from everyone ... it's about confidence in the children' and there is no question that the pupils repay the confidence shown in them with a deep commitment to the school that underpins their social and academic development.

The standard of work they achieve in the classrooms is never less than good and, overall, is of the highest quality. Particularly noteworthy is the sophisticated writing produced by many of the older pupils. Their delight in the impact of well-chosen words and images and carefully crafted sentences is a powerful testimony not only to the quality of the teaching they currently enjoy but to the high expectations established from their early days in the Nursery and Reception classes. The quality of teachers' individual planning, together with their awareness of colleagues' work, ensures a coherent experience for pupils as they move through the school. The pupils' work is marked conscientiously and positively so that they are encouraged to meet challenging targets. Pupils present their work with pride and are eager to talk about it to visitors. In every classroom, high quality displays are used effectively not only to celebrate individual pupils' achievements but to set the standard for others.

Socially, the pupils show impressive levels of care and understanding towards each other. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included unobtrusively in groups at work or play; 'all the way through school, we've been supported', said the parent of one. The achievement of pupils who persevere and succeed with work that they find particularly difficult is often acknowledged by their peers through applause or by encouraging comments. One young pupil's view is that 'everyone is so kind and helpful' and evidence of this is seen in every classroom as well as in play areas. 'It is a very happy school with happy children' said a parent; this is due in part to the responsibility pupils are given for playing a full part in sustaining the ethos of the school, for example through involvement in class and school councils and a buddy system. Behaviour is excellent and pupils say that on the rare occasions when someone misbehaves, they understand and accept the consequence of their actions. A thorough programme of personal, social and health education is woven through the curriculum. In effect, it provides the mortar between the building blocks of other subjects and enables the pupils to become confident in expressing and sharing ideas and feelings about themselves and their work. All adults in the school community are treated with equal respect and play their part in living its values and setting an example to the pupils.

The chair of governors is quick to point out that managers 'have not become complacent'. Attendance is only average despite the obvious quality of the education and care provided by the school. Despite the overall excellence of the pupils' work, there are minor inconsistencies in the degree of challenge offered in some lessons. The headteacher is keen to enhance the use of new technologies and to draw on new national materials for developing literacy, numeracy and the pupils' personal development. Nonetheless, he is sufficiently confident in what the school already does to take these materials on merit, using what will enhance current provision without undermining what has been shown to work well.

The headteacher involves staff and governors in discussing priorities over a period of time so that when a definitive plan emerges, the whole community understands it, feels ownership for it and has the confidence to implement it. The school therefore has outstanding capacity to attain even higher standards of academic achievement and personal development. Given the standards already achieved and the considered approach to resourcing new initiatives, the school gives very good value for money.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

When they enter the Nursery, children's attainment is broadly in line with what would be expected. They make very good progress and many exceed the standards expected by the time they leave Reception. 'We couldn't have hoped for a better start to our child's education' was the opinion of one parent. Good progress continues through the school, and pupils in Year 6 achieve scores in tests that are significantly above the national average. In recent years, the school has been in the top 10% of schools nationally when measuring the pupils' progress. Overall, therefore, progress is outstanding, as reflected in the words of the parent who commented, 'my child has come on leaps and bounds ... it gives me great peace of mind to know that she is in a school with such extremely high standards.'

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding provision for the pupils' personal development and well-being is at the heart of the school's success. It results in a caring, considerate community that takes genuine pleasure in individual achievement and happiness. 'The school gives every child a positive outlook on life' is one parent's apt comment. It is a totally safe environment, where pupils know that any concerns will be taken seriously. Year 6 'buddies' perform an invaluable service in supporting younger pupils and alerting teachers to any potential problems. Pupils are eager to support charities and also show a keen sense of the value of self-help, for example in using the structures of pupil councils to secure improvements to outdoor play areas and staging and seating in the hall.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Many parents commented that the school 'has an excellent teaching staff' and that 'teaching is of a very high standard.' All teaching is at least very good; much is outstanding. Teachers use a wide range of approaches and many pupils particularly enjoy the opportunity to use laptop computers or to take part in practical activities. Staff encourage pupils to work together whenever possible but are sensitive to the needs of individuals. A pupil in Reception said 'We can put our name down to do different things ... it's fair and I like it ... we work together lots.' Teachers set different tasks and specific targets that provide just the right degree of challenge so that pupils gain confidence and independence as well as improving their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils of all abilities learn well because lessons are planned and delivered in ways that take account of their different needs.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum is carefully planned with links between subjects that provide a coherent framework for pupils. Teachers evaluate the impact of each half term's work and cross refer schemes of work to ensure continuity. Pupils are encouraged to deepen their understanding and make connections between subjects in ways that inspire their particular interests. Growing emphasis is put on speaking and listening and creativity as ways of involving pupils more actively in their work. One parent of an older pupil said that the school had 'fired his imagination, enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge as well as encouraging musical talents, artistic interest and sporting activities.' A rich variety of educational visits and of extra-curricular activities enhances the formal curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The parent who described Edmondsley as 'an excellent school that takes account of the varying abilities of the children and brings out the best in them' hit the nail on the head. Thoughtful marking helps pupils understand their current levels of attainment and give advice on how to improve them. The outstanding programme of personal, social and health education is enhanced by an imaginative approach to assessment that encourages pupils to use responses such as role play or display, both to show their understanding and to explore potentially sensitive subjects. The work of the class and school councils provides a genuine context for pupils to learn skills such as presenting an argument to a meeting, elements of citizenship such as electoral procedures, and aspects of economic understanding such as planning for a whole school walk and picnic. A teacher summed up this quality of the school by explaining,

'it's a family school ... everybody enjoys coming ... the children have high expectations of themselves as we do of them.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

It is clear that the leadership of the headteacher is a major factor in the school's success but he is well supported by the whole school community. His management style, described as 'approachable', encourages others to take appropriate responsibility for improving the work of the school in their own areas. Team leaders and subject co-ordinators keep schemes of work up to date and are constantly seeking ways to make links across the curriculum. They check the pupils' books to make sure that the work they are given is right for them. Governors have a good understanding of the school and many take an active interest in visiting lessons and talking directly to teachers about their work. The school's self-evaluation and development planning is of high quality, as are communications with parents. This is a school that knows the quality of its work and is not falsely modest in celebrating what it does well.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

To the pupils of:

Edmondsley Primary School

Front Street

Edmondsley

Durham

County Durham

DH7 6DU

12 July 2006

Dear Pupils

I had a really enjoyable day when I visited your school. You are very polite to visitors and kind to each other. You like to help your friends, your teachers and the other adults who work at the school. I saw lots of outstanding work that you have done and was pleased that so many of you were keen to tell me what you like about Edmondsley. The pupils who told me that 'everyone is so kind and helpful' and that 'the teachers are really nice' were right – I think so too!

I think you are lucky to go to a school where everyone cares so much for each other. Mr Dodd and the other teachers give you lots of chances to say what you think about the school and how you would like to change things – I was interested to hear about the suggestions you made for new seats in the hall, for example. Your teachers give you interesting things to do in class and make very helpful comments on your work, so that you can improve it. Most of you try very hard in class and learn very quickly so that when you are in Year 6 you get excellent results in tests.

I asked Mr Dodd why some children seem to have quite a few days off school and he said that bad weather can make travelling difficult for families who live a long way from the school. I hope that you all come to school as often as you can, because it must be great fun there and it is a shame to miss the good things that go on.

Thank you again for being so polite and helpful during my visit. Your school is one of the best I have visited, and you should all be proud of that. I hope you continue to be very happy at Edmondsley, and in your future lives.

My very best wishes to you all.

Andrew Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector