



Ebchester CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114214
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279334
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Shaw Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Ebchester
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Consett, County Durham DH8 0QB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 560349
Number on roll	94	Fax number	01207 560349
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr G Gibson
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr Richard Coombes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a largely rural population in a small village on the outskirts of Consett. All 94 children are of white British heritage. A high percentage start and leave school at times other than normal. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Eligibility for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved a variety of awards, including those for healthy schools and Eco schools. It has anti-bullying accreditation. Attainment on entry is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection findings agree with the school's own self-evaluation that this is a good school that gives good value for money. Parents have positive views of the school, which has very good links with other organisations. A good grounding is provided in the Foundation Stage, where children make good progress and achieve well. Good teaching throughout the school leads to good progress and achievement, and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school makes good use of assessments to track progress but does not consistently set individual targets to help children improve. Children enjoy school and the school uses its grounds well to develop children's independence and practical skills. Behaviour is generally very good and most children feel very positive about school. The curriculum is rich and well balanced with a good focus on developing skills in English and mathematics. Work is generally well planned, but planning does not provide systematic opportunities for subjects to be linked together. The school is very caring, and health and safety are well catered for. Leadership and management are good, although governors need to refine their methods of checking the effectiveness of the decisions they make. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all children have individual targets for improvement.
- Plan topics that link subject skills together.
- Check systematically on the effectiveness of governors' decisions on provision and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children enter with average standards. Their good progress in the Foundation Stage is maintained in the rest of the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The 2005 results for Year 6 dipped to below average from the above average standards of the previous three years. This was caused by the high levels of outward mobility in this small cohort. However, the evidence from inspection is that standards are improving to their previous levels. This is reflected by the good progress currently being made in lessons.

In the 2005 tests, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were significantly below the national average. This was because in this small cohort of 13 children there was an above average proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a high mobility rate. In the current Year 2, children's good progress in lessons ensures that they are on course to attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average.

Throughout the school, children consistently achieve well because the teaching is good. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They are identified at an early stage and given good support. Standards in information communication technology (ICT) are broadly average. However, with the recent acquisition of laptops and interactive whiteboards standards are rising.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good overall, with some outstanding features. For example, the contribution of school council members to the life of the school is excellent. Children have been carefully trained in mediation strategies, and say that they feel safe and that bullying is rare. Children enjoy school, they behave very well and relationships are very good. A nationally organised Forest Schools programme is used to help younger children develop self-confidence, which is built on throughout the school. Older children develop exemplary levels of responsibility and show high levels of self-esteem. Children know how to lead healthy lifestyles and work safely. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Most children have a very good understanding of the differences between right and wrong. They work well together and help those less fortunate than themselves in a wide range of fundraising activities. Spiritual development is good and children develop a good understanding of their own culture. They have a satisfactory understanding of the culturally diverse nature of society. Because there is a strong emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and their social skills are well developed, children are well prepared for their future economic well-being. Attendance is average but is improving because successful strategies are in place to encourage good attendance. Children have many opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the community. For example, trained children make a significant contribution to school life by helping others, and groups of children entertain senior citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage helps children make a good start. Relationships are very good and teachers make good use of speaking and listening skills to extend learning. Assessment is used well in the planning of work and during lessons, where teachers respond flexibly to children's different levels of understanding. However, this information is not used to provide pupils with individual targets for improvement. Work is well suited to differing ages and abilities in mixed-age classes. The organisation of Years 3 to 6 in classes according to ability in mathematics and English helps them to make good progress. Teachers work very closely with teaching support assistants, particularly in providing good support for those with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities. Warm relationships throughout the school lead to well-ordered lessons where children are confident and eager to contribute. Teachers have high expectations. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace and good use is made of interactive whiteboards to make lessons interesting. This complements well the practical activities children develop in their work in the school grounds.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has improved since the previous inspection. It is generally well planned so that all children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, build carefully on previous work. A strong emphasis is given to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. However, planning does not sufficiently link subjects together in order to extend learning. The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start. Throughout the school, a significant feature of the curriculum is the way the school's extensive woodland and wetland areas are used to make work stimulating, interesting and relevant. Very good enrichment of the curriculum includes out of school visits and visitors to the school, such as dancers, musicians and environmentalists. There is a good range of well attended extracurricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a very caring atmosphere and adults provide good role models, reflecting the school's Christian values. Relationships are very good. Each child is highly valued, and child protection and health and safety arrangements are thoroughly implemented. A strong emphasis on promoting emotional well-being contributes to the confidence and high self-esteem shown by many children. Staff know children and their families well. Strong links with outside agencies complement the support given to children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Well constructed individual education plans target the needs of these children effectively. There are high expectations of children's behaviour and children have many opportunities to work independently, to show initiative and to care for each other. Efficient systems are in place to assess standards and to track progress. However, the school does not consistently provide children with individual targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides a clear vision for improvement. His deep commitment and very caring approach set the tone for the happy and hard-working ethos of the school. He is well supported by staff who ensure that children receive a broad range of educational experiences which give them the skills and confidence to succeed as they progress through school and beyond. The headteacher, governors and staff form an effective partnership and know the strengths

and weaknesses of the school well. The school improvement plan enables the school to have a long-term view of its priorities. For example, recent building extensions have improved provision and governors have purchased land adjacent to the school in order to extend the school grounds. However, the governors' evaluations of the effect of decisions they make are not systematic enough. Surveys of parents' views indicate general satisfaction with the education their children receive. Teaching and learning are monitored effectively in order to improve standards and raise achievement. The provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well managed. Strong leadership has enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection and to show good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

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

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Mr Richard Coombes

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23 March 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for your friendly and courteous welcome. I was impressed when I met those of you who are on the school council and the buddies. They work very hard to help others and to help to improve the school.

Mr. Coombes leads the school well and helps to make it a happy and caring place. Your teachers and support staff know you and your families very well and give you interesting lessons and exciting experiences. You work hard and always try to do your best. You have a good range of after-school clubs and sporting activities and you understand the importance of healthy eating and plenty of exercise. You have lots of opportunities to do jobs around school and to be helpful and you can be trusted to be sensible. I like the way you use the school grounds in your work and the Eco flag flying above the school is a good sign that you help to care for the environment.

Teachers keep a careful check on how well you are doing and share it with you so you know how you can improve. This can be done better by setting you individual targets for you to reach. Some children in geography used computers and number skills to help them. I have asked your teachers to give you more chances to use your skills from different subjects together so that you can increase your understanding. I have also asked Mr Coombes and the governors to improve the way they check to see that the changes they make are helping you to learn better.

Thank you again. I enjoyed my lunches and conversations with you and I shall remember sharing in the family feeling that is an important part of your school.

Best wishes

David Earley

Lead Inspector