



Esh C of E (Aided) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114251
LEA Durham
Inspection number 279346
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Margaret Shepherd

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Front Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Esh Village
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Durham, County Durham
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 3731324
Number on roll	76	Fax number	0191 373 1324
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Alison Hiles
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Mike Urwin

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	Inspection number 279346
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves the small village of Esh and outlying areas. The social and economic circumstances of the families are average overall. With 76 children on roll, the school is much smaller than average. There are considerable variations in the size of year groups. Standards on entry to the school also vary but overall they are average. The proportions of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who are eligible for free school meals are average. Each of the three classes is of mixed age. There is a high level of stability in the staff and governors. The school shares a new sports and arts centre with the neighbouring Catholic primary school. The building of this centre destroyed the school's grassed play area. The school's buildings were extended considerably in 2004 to provide a larger classroom and outdoor learning area for Reception and Year 1 children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The inspection confirms the school's own judgement. Achievement is outstanding. By the time children leave the school, their standards are significantly higher than average. Their personal development and well being are excellent. The headteacher's leadership and management are outstanding. He sets an extremely clear educational direction. He values every member of staff and creates a harmonious team who share both his vision and his drive to go on improving the work of the school. Provision and achievement in Reception are outstanding. Teaching is outstanding. All staff have an extremely high commitment to the school and work enthusiastically together to provide work that matches every child's individual needs. The curriculum is outstanding. Care, guidance and welfare are good. The lack of the school's grassed play area reduces children's opportunities for learning and playing outdoors. The outdoor area for Reception is too exposed to the weather. The school provides outstanding value for money. It has managed to raise standards even higher since the previous inspection. It knows itself extremely well and its capacity for continued improvement is outstanding.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out the plans to make the grassed area suitable for children's use.
- Provide more shelter for the outdoor learning area for Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. By the time children leave the school, standards are exceptionally high. The school sets itself very challenging targets and prides itself on reaching them. These high standards are evident over many years despite the fact that standards on entry to the school vary from year to year. Even when the year group is very small and every child's achievement counts for a large percentage of the final results, the school sustains its high standards. Over the past two years standards have risen even further. In 2005 every Year 6 child reached the expected level in each subject and more than half the children reached higher levels than expected for their age. Standards were particularly good in science.

The high standards stem from outstanding achievement through the school.

Children make an excellent start in Reception. These children greatly benefit from working with the Year 1 children in the class and strive to do their best. Achievement does not drop as children move between classes. As in Year 6, standards over time in Year 2 are significantly higher than average and many children reach higher levels than those expected for their age.

The more able children fulfil their potential throughout the school. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve very well. They have a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve. They work hard to develop their skills, and are delighted to celebrate their success and move on to the next target.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. The children exemplify the school's motto of 'Everyone Smiles Here'. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and work very hard in lessons. They appreciate the wide range of different opportunities the school provides for learning. Children have a very good understanding of their own learning and know what they need to do to improve. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Rates of attendance are consistently higher than average.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children appreciate their Christian heritage and reflect sensitively at times such as prayers in assembly. From an early start in Reception, they love to learn about different customs and festivals. Children have a very good understanding of right and wrong and consider issues such as bullying very seriously. They all feel safe and know when they need to be careful. They drink water and eat fruit with enjoyment and are very aware of the importance of healthy living.

Children see their school as one big happy family and have an excellent understanding of their growing role in the community. Younger children work remarkably well in their 'Blue Dragon' project. They cooperate extremely well to carry out a wide range of different activities, from dance productions to making dinosaur cakes. Older children develop an excellent understanding of living together during their residential trip to Richmond. Their excellent basic skills, self confidence and teamwork equip them well for their future education and lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers work extremely well with each other and with the classroom assistant. They understand the planned learning thoroughly. Staff share together in great detail the progress children make in lessons and over time, then modify their planning to match children's changing needs. Planning for each class takes very full account of pupils' different ages. Teachers organise children of different attainments very effectively. The arrangement for more able children to work with older children challenges their learning most effectively. The arrangement for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to work with younger children is equally effective in providing work that precisely matches their individual needs. Teachers are extremely sensitive to this mix of age groups and ensure that children

enjoy their learning and raise their self-esteem. Teachers have very high expectations. They expect children to consider questions in whole-class sessions very carefully, then settle down quickly to their tasks and do their best. They provide high quality opportunities for children to evaluate their own work and to identify their future learning needs. Teachers use resources extremely effectively to stimulate children's learning and to sustain their concentration. The management of behaviour is exemplary and is based on very strong relationships with the children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. This matches the school's own judgement. Staff work extremely hard to ensure that the curriculum meets all requirements and matches all the learning needs of the mixed age classes. They plan different subjects carefully to ensure that learning builds on previous understanding without repetition. The Reception teacher manages to combine the National Curriculum and the Reception curriculum extremely well. Teachers plan very exciting learning experiences which match children's needs and interests very closely. The residential visit for children in Years 4 to 6 is meticulously organised to provide a breadth of experiences that promote both academic and personal development. The use of the new sports and arts centre very effectively extends children's opportunities for physical and creative development, and powerfully enhances their ability to work safely and to keep active and healthy. Children keenly appreciate the variety that the school provides, including the many extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good, with outstanding features. The inspection confirms the school's own judgement. The great majority of the school's provision is outstanding. The school has extremely strong relationships with parents. Parents are full of praise for the school. They made comments such as, 'The school strives for excellence at all levels', and 'I am deeply impressed by the standards throughout the school ... learning is fun, varied and interesting ... there is a strong ethos of discipline and hard work'. The headteacher and his staff are extremely successful at working in partnership with parents to extend children's learning and well-being continuously at both school and home. The Reception/Year 1 home-school file is particularly impressive. The only weakness is in accommodation. The school cannot offer opportunities for children to play large ball games safely. The lack of protection for the outdoor area in Reception reduces children's opportunities for learning. The school plans to remedy these weaknesses. All staff work very hard together to protect and to safeguard children around school, and to promote their care and welfare. The emphasis on one big happy family means that staff know the particular needs of each child very well and know what to do in an emergency. Everyone works very hard to support and encourage vulnerable children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Inspector and school agree that leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher sets an extremely clear direction for the work of the school. He ensures that a careful balance is maintained between achieving ever higher standards and promoting every child's personal development and well-being. He creates a very strong whole-school ethos, where staff strive for excellence and where levels of communication are extremely high. He knows every child extremely well. He deploys staff very carefully to make maximum use of their time and to support the different needs of the mixed age classes. The coordinators carry heavy loads that do not daunt them at all. They work diligently across their different areas of responsibility and continually set new targets to achieve, such as the recently awarded Silver Artsmark. The headteacher and staff continuously evaluate their work to ensure equal opportunities for every child. Governors have an excellent understanding of the school and a very good balance of expertise. Some governors have an extremely long association with the school, but that has not diminished their enthusiasm for their responsibilities. Financial management is very shrewd.

The school knows itself very well. It greatly values the views of parents, children and other stakeholders. Every member of the school community is proud of their school. It has an unremitting determination to improve its provision and standards. The high levels of communication and respect between staff give the school an excellent capacity to go on improving.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	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	1	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

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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Esh C of E (Aided) Primary School

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16 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work.

The best things about your school are:

the high quality of your work and the excellent progress that you make through the school

the way you make your school motto of Everyone Smiles Here come true

the way you all work and play together like one big happy family

your excellent behaviour in your lessons, around the school, at lunchtime and in the playground

the way you love coming to school and do your best to produce good work

your understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe

your knowledge of what you need to do next to make your work better

your excellent teachers, who you like so much

your residential trip to Richmond and your Blue Dragon project

the great start to learning and working together that you made in Reception

the way that all your staff look after you that you said you appreciated

your headteacher who knows you all so well

the work your teachers do to lead different subjects in the school and make sure that your learning gets more and more interesting

your governors who know so much about your school.

One of the things that I have asked your school to do is to make the land next to the sports and arts hall suitable for you to work and play on. The other thing that I have asked is to improve the protection of the outdoor learning area so that children in reception can use lots of different equipment out there in bad weather.

Best wishes
Maggi Shepherd
Lead inspector
Annex B