



Egerton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111098
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288854
Inspection date 17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Padgett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bexton Road
School category	Community		Knutsford
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA16 0EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01565 651206
Number on roll (school)	206	Fax number	01565 650984
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Colin Hurrell
		Headteacher	Mrs Alison Hooper
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	17 October 2006	288854

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Egerton is an average sized primary school situated in the centre of Knutsford. Pupils come from a broad range of social backgrounds, with the balance towards the more advantaged. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals or having learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage with just a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some excellent features. It has seen a major change in leadership since the last inspection. The current headteacher has made an outstanding start in her first year. The many strengths of the school have been maintained and firm foundations for further improvement have been laid.

Pupils are very happy at the school. Most of them achieve well because they are well taught, and they feel safe because they are cared for very effectively. They are successfully building the skills they need for their future lives. There are relatively few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but these pupils are supported very well, and included fully in all that the school offers. They make good progress.

Standards are above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and they have been maintained at this level since before the last inspection. However, raising pupils' standards in mathematics to match those in English and science remains an area for further development, despite some success in the most recent tests.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their knowledge and take-up of a healthy lifestyle and their awareness of and care for the environment are exceptional. So are the cultural links with the rediscovered Egerton School in Kenya and the highly productive links with staff at Tatton Hall. Staff have used these opportunities very well to add interest and excitement to the curriculum. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and attendance is well above average. Pupils are becoming good citizens and care for each other well. The school council, named Eco School Voices, is doing a very responsible job representing the pupils' interests.

The school is well led and managed. Good relationships with parents and the community have been maintained and extended; for example, with the associated pre-school and the local high school. The headteacher has a thorough and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, which include improving the assessment of pupils' work in class and raising the achievement of the most able. She has the full confidence of staff and governors and has managed the changeover of leadership outstandingly well. There are clear development plans, the senior leadership team is highly motivated and the school is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teachers' assessment of pupils' standards and the tracking of their progress, and involve the pupils more in this process.
- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Provide more challenge to the most able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils' attainment on entry varies considerably in any one year, and from year to year, but is slightly above average overall. Pupils get a good start in Reception where they make good progress in all areas of learning.

Standards at Years 2 and 6 have been above average since before the last inspection. Progress builds steadily through the school. However, within this generally positive picture, standards in mathematics have been below those in English and science, particularly at the higher levels for the more able pupils. This was remedied in 2006, when the school reached its very challenging target for the higher Level 5 at Year 6, although overall, mathematics remains the weakest of the three core subjects. The 2006 results are lower than in previous years. This is not a cause for concern. The dip is explained by a combination of factors: disruption to staffing, the difference from one cohort to another, and movements of pupils in and out of the school during the school year. Moreover, the school analyses its performance rigorously; spots problem areas early, such as this year, the difference between reading and writing results at Year 6; and takes effective action to restore standards.

Pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties receive very good support from their teachers, teaching assistants and the special needs coordinator. They make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils make exceptional progress in their personal development. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils enjoy their education. They have good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is good and there are harmonious relationships at all levels. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This was seen clearly in the assembly observed during the inspection, where they learned about the importance of teamwork, referenced to all the successes they had shared in the recent past. The pupils' understanding of what is required to live a healthy life is highly developed, and in their enjoyment of physical exercise and their choices of healthy food they put their learning into practice. Pupils are developing into mature, well balanced and responsible young people. They welcome the many opportunities to take responsibility and help others; for example, as road safety and recycling officers. This is best seen in the work of the Eco School Voices, a name chosen by the pupils for their school council, where they show great sensitivity for the environment and inventiveness in working out schemes to raise funds for humanitarian causes. Even so, the pupils have the right skills and attitude to take on even greater responsibilities than they do at present. Their good achievement lays a strong foundation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection nearly all lessons were good and some better. No lessons were unsatisfactory. Typically, teachers give the pupils clear learning objectives, and prepare work that is well matched to their different levels of understanding and knowledge. The work for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effectively taught by teaching assistants, who make an important contribution to the work of other groups too. Pupils' work is often of a high standard for their age, particularly in Year 2. Some exciting work was seen with Year 6 pupils working on play scripts, which involved their using many other skills in addition to those connected with literacy. Work is marked thoroughly and teachers' comments are positive, recognising effort and achievement. However, pupils are not often given guidance for future targets and they are not sufficiently involved in the assessment of their progress. The school is developing its approach to assessment in the class.

The school's results over the last few years indicate that the more able could achieve more. However, during the inspection, teachers generally made good provision for the top groups, providing them with more demanding work. So work on this issue has begun. It has, however, been retained as a key issue for the school to address until better progress for the more able can be demonstrated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is very good. It meets requirements and the needs of all the pupils. Art, science and physical education are very popular. However, the curriculum is at a changing point. The school is now considering a different approach, where links between subjects are made stronger, and where pupils can follow themes that involve several subjects and core skills. Work of this nature of an outstanding quality, artwork in particular, has already been accomplished in connection with the Egerton School in Kenya, and in collaboration with the grounds staff at Tatton Hall. These projects perfectly exemplify what the school seeks to achieve.

The school is outward looking. It is seeking good curriculum practice in other Cheshire schools. It is entrepreneurial in solving curriculum problems, such as in the use of outside providers to support extra-curricular activities and release teachers for the required planning, preparation and assessment time. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are welcome to these and they also have activities of their own.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good, overall, but would be outstanding were it not for a lack of rigour in the academic guidance for pupils. A major reason why the pupils are happy at the school is because they feel safe. Arrangements for safeguarding, including those for child protection and to ensure that adults in contact with pupils are suitable, are of good quality. Parents have complete confidence in the school's care of their children. The new headteacher greets parents at the gate at the beginning and end of the school day. Transition arrangements from the pre-school to Reception are of good quality, and the school works closely with the local high school to achieve a smooth transition to secondary education. There are close links with community health services and other agencies. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils are fully included in all that the school offers.

With the exception of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the school does not yet provide sufficient academic guidance for pupils. There is now a rigorous system for monitoring the performance of the school, including tracking the progress of pupils. However, this provides more of an overview for management than a tool for teachers to work closely with the pupils in their classes, and this is where the shortfall is. Improving the information available to teachers so that they can provide challenging targets for pupils, and involving pupils more in evaluating their work, is recognised as a school development point.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There has been a smooth transfer of leadership to the new headteacher. The good ethos of the school, where all pupils are known and valued, has been maintained. This is seen as very important by parents, some of whom have hardly noticed a difference! However, behind the scenes, the current headteacher has worked very hard to maintain what is good while laying strong foundations for future improvement.

She has made an outstandingly good start. Despite a first year made more difficult by the illness of key staff, the school is now strongly placed to improve further. The headteacher has built up a highly motivated senior leadership team that is focused on the further improvement of teaching, learning and the curriculum. Challenges are seen as opportunities. Through consultation, the headteacher has won over staff and governors to her vision for the school's future direction. Parents, too, are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Partnerships have been strengthened, such as those with the pre-school, other schools and with the local business community. New opportunities, such as those presented by the discovery of another Egerton school in Kenya, and the opportunity to work with the staff at Tatton Hall, have been taken up with enthusiasm and are proving highly beneficial in promoting learning.

The arrangements to implement and monitor the development plans, through tracking pupils' performance and rigorous self-evaluation are also well established. However, it is still early days for the new leadership. The senior leadership team and subject leaders have yet to deliver the vision by way of raised standards for pupils and their greater enjoyment of school. Governors provide good support for and close involvement with the school, but as yet are at the early stages of challenging the professionals on the school's performance. Nevertheless, much has already been achieved, there is a high degree of commitment at all levels and the capacity for improvement is very good.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, I inspected your school recently with my colleague Michael Maddison. You may also remember that I came along to see your school council, Eco School Voices, at work during lunchtime. I was very impressed. You are very well informed about environmental issues and you had such good ideas for fundraising to support your projects.

Please thank all those to whom Michael and I spoke during the inspection for talking to us and sharing their views about the school. Everyone was helpful and friendly and I was strongly influenced by what you said. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school. Please ensure that all the pupils know of my findings.

Egerton is a good school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Under your new headteacher, it continues to develop and improve. You clearly enjoy school and have a lot of fun. Many pupils said they wouldn't want to be anywhere else. You achieve well, because you are taught well by very dedicated teachers, and since you are very well cared for, you feel safe. We were impressed by your good teamwork and the way you celebrated each other's success in your assembly. Through your enthusiasm for healthy eating and physical exercise, you are laying good foundations for your future health. Your horizons have been broadened by the wonderful discovery of your sister school in Kenya, and you deserve much praise for your success in winning a gold medal from the Royal Horticultural Society with your African garden. You have created a very special link with Tatton Hall.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors are determined to make the school even better. They have good ideas and high quality plans. I agreed with them. They are going to raise standards in mathematics, involve you more in checking how well you are learning, and provide more challenging work for those of you who find learning easy. They have many other good ideas too, so it looks as if you are going to continue to enjoy your education and achieve even more in the future. I hope you will play your part in improvement and, from what we saw, I am confident you can.