

Eldon Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111589
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	288995
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	523
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Watson
Headteacher	Madame Julie Deville
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001
School address	Eldon Grove Hartlepool TS26 9LY
Telephone number	01429 273895
Fax number	01429 275484

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average size primary school, which includes a large Nursery unit, serves an area that is broadly average in terms of socio-economic advantage. Children start school in the Foundation Stage with standards that are typical for their age. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from a White British heritage, with a very low number of minority ethnic pupils, from mostly Asian origins. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average although the number with statements of special educational need is low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Eldon Grove Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher's strong and effective leadership promotes a clear philosophy that every child does matter and that they should all achieve as well as possible. Her determination and commitment have improved the school since her relatively recent appointment. She and her new senior team work well with parents, the local authority and the local community in support of pupils' personal development and well-being.

Pupils enjoy school and thrive when their accomplishments are recognised in work on display and in assemblies. They are enthusiastic and cheerful: one happily volunteered that she liked it here 'because of the teaching, and its fun!' Pupils conduct themselves well, especially in lessons and around the building. Behaviour is good overall and pupils say that any bullying is dealt with promptly. Pupils are aware of the importance of physical activity and making sensible choices from the lunch-time menu. Older pupils contribute satisfactorily to their school community; such as, through the recently established school council and through the highly acclaimed school choir. Their average level of basic skills prepares pupils satisfactorily for their move to secondary school. Parents are positive about the school and most have high regard for the recent improvement in their children's progress. Only a few express concerns, mainly about playground behaviour. Parents especially value the care the school provides. One who commented sums up their views, 'I have always found the staff to be approachable, understanding and attentive to the children's needs.'

Teaching and provision in the Foundation Stage are very good. They are based on very good assessment and a good understanding of children's needs. Imaginative activities excite and absorb the children. In turn, pupils make especially good progress in their personal and social development and their language and communication skills. Teaching elsewhere is satisfactory overall, though some is good or outstanding. Standards are average but could be better. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress and in 2006 reached average standards. Year 6 pupils also make satisfactory progress and in 2006 achieved better than in 2005. Standards overall at Year 6 in 2006 were average although science results fell and too few pupils reached the higher level in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils.

The headteacher, governors and senior staff work well together. They have a clear picture of most aspects of the school's work but the current school improvement plan is rather broad and not focused sharply enough on raising standards. The school has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the last year or so. Given the current circumstances in the school with the effective leadership of the headteacher, good governance and supportive parents, the school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve in future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly for higher attainers, and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching to the level of the best in the school.
- Review and concentrate attention on the most significant areas for improvement in the school improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach average standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in all areas of learning so that by the end of Reception most reach the expectations for their age with a good number exceeding them. Particularly good progress occurs in children's personal and social development and language and communication skills.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress. In 2006, pupils in Year 2 reached average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 6, the test results for 2006 were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared to 2005, English and mathematics results improved, but science results fell-back. Results were particularly good in reading, where almost half of the pupils exceeded the expected level for their age, but too few pupils reached the higher level in writing. School data indicates that this year there will be a rise in the number of pupils gaining the higher levels in writing. The current Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their targets in the national tests. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Boys did not do as well as girls, particularly in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. After benefiting from a very good start in the Foundation Stage, pupils throughout the school develop very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy all that they do. Pupils are friendly, and polite and courteous to one another and adults. Effective management of behaviour, based on consistent codes of conduct, ensures for the most part pupils' behave well, although in the playground behaviour is only satisfactory. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the choices required to keep fit and healthy. They are starting to contribute to making their school a happier and safer place to be. Older pupils on the new school council, and those who act as 'playground friends', take on their responsibilities enthusiastically and maturely. Attendance is average and improving because of the efforts of the school to promote better attendance and punctuality with parents. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good and outstanding features seen during inspection. The quality of teaching and learning varies from class to class, which results in differing rates of progress. Where teaching is good, lessons are planned with due consideration for the pupils' prior skills and knowledge. As a consequence, pupils are given work that matches their needs resulting in them making good progress. Good relationships exist between teachers, support staff and pupils, which motivates pupils to work hard to please them. At times, teachers' explanations are too long, which results in pupils losing interest and this slows learning and makes pupils less prepared for the tasks where they are expected to work alone. In some lessons, assessment is not used effectively enough to identify and plan for pupils' needs. As a result,

more able pupils are not always challenged enough. Teaching assistants give suitable support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ensure that these pupils are fully included in school life. The quality of marking varies from class to class. It is often positive and encouraging, but does not consistently provide pupils with clear enough guidance about how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality and range of experience and opportunities for learning through the curriculum are satisfactory, and meet all statutory requirements. The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives children a very good preparation for future learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, recent improvements to the curriculum enable pupils to consolidate and extend their skills; for example, in writing. The 'Big Write' initiative in Years 2 and 6 illustrates this really well. However, planning does not yet ensure basic skills are as fully developed in all subjects of the curriculum as they might be. Good and supportive partnerships enhance pupils' learning and contribute to their well-being. For example, the town Football Club offers help to improve pupils' study skills and the Hartlepool Big Walk initiative contributes to physical well-being. Links with local schools, and a wide range of visits and visitors, further enrich pupils' learning. Pupils voluntarily take part in after school sports and physical activities that contribute to their fitness and to their cultural development through drama, art and singing in the choir. However, numbers are relatively low with all pupils from Years 4 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Parents rightly say that their children are well cared for because staff are dedicated to their welfare. Well thought out procedures protect and safeguard pupils. Pupils feel safe because relationships are good, staff know pupils well and pupils know that staff will help them overcome any difficulties. Children in the Foundation Stage are particularly well supported. They settle quickly into school and their interests are helped to flourish so that they make rapid gains in learning. Teachers and teaching assistant work well together in lessons to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the guidance they receive does not always match their specific needs. A relatively new and systematic approach to track pupils' progress in their academic work and personal development is securely in place but making use of it is still developing. Pupils have a better understanding of how to improve their writing than in other aspects of their work. Practices to ensure that pupils know how well they are getting on and are fully involved in understanding their next steps are not yet used consistently in all classes and subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management throughout the school are satisfactory with good governance. The relatively recently appointed headteacher's very effective leadership sets the tone for the positive climate for learning that all children thrive on and enjoy. Governors are justifiably delighted with her emphasis on improving standards. The governing body is dedicated and diligent in seeing that, through their own first hand involvement, the school is competently led and managed and administered. A new team of senior staff clearly share the headteacher's

vision and is working to improve standards further for all learners. Attention to raise the quality of teaching has ensured greater progress and achievement in 2006 in English and mathematics. Together with the headteacher, senior staff rigorously monitor and review the quality of education and all aspects of school life. School evaluation is accurate; for example, in identifying the need for improvement in standards and the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, planning to tackle these issues does not indicate sufficiently clearly the improvements expected. Although the school knows that raising standards further centres upon improving teaching, its focus of attention is blurred by a commendable desire to improve many other aspects of the school's work at the same time.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Eldon Grove Primary School

Eldon Grove

Hartlepool

TS26 9LY

26 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Mrs Fitzpatrick, Mrs Dodd and I really enjoyed our visit to your school last week. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and your assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and really helpful. We enjoyed talking to you and we were impressed with those of you on the school council whom we met. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how you contribute to school life. I know the headteacher and staff are all very proud of you.

Your school has a very friendly atmosphere. We are pleased you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. You are well behaved and have good manners. Many of your lessons are good and some really stand out, but others are rather ordinary. We were impressed with your hard work and the way you like to take part. You obviously enjoy all the practical activities. Two years ago pupils did not do as well as they should. Results were lower than they should have been, especially in English. Last year the school found ways to make English more interesting and results in the Year 6 tests were higher. We have asked the school to concentrate on finding more ways to help everyone do better in writing and science. We have also asked your teachers to make all your lessons as good as the best in the school.

Some of you will leave at the end of this year to join a new school. You have many opportunities at Eldon Grove Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely,

Graeme Clarke

(Lead inspector)