

Elwick Hall C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111670
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	289024
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	118
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev John Lund
Headteacher	Mr Stephen McDonald
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002
School address	North Lane Elwick Hartlepool TS27 3EG
Telephone number	01429 274904
Fax number	01429 232539

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2007
Inspection number	289024

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small village school situated a few miles from Hartlepool. The area is generally advantaged in all respects. This is reflected in the very small proportion of pupils having free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and there are a very small number of pupils who are not of White British origin. When they join the Nursery, the children's attainment is typical for their age in all areas of learning. The school changed to Aided status in 2003. The recently appointed headteacher is also the headteacher of a nearby village school. A supply teacher was covering a vacant teaching post during the inspection. The school recently gained the ActiveMark award, Basic Skills award and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Elwick C of E Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils, with some good features. It is recovering from a period of underachievement in Key Stage 2 and several staffing changes in recent years. The quality of care and support is good. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy everything the school has to offer and generally behave well. The school's efforts to improve achievement are meeting with some success as a result of a better quality of teaching having an overall beneficial effect on learning. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Their achievement from average starting points is satisfactory overall, but some pupils have not done as well as they ought, particularly in writing by the end of Year 2 and in English at Key Stage 2.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has quickly secured the confidence of the school community. As parents commented, 'The new head is beginning to make a difference.' He is well supported by a senior leadership team and joint actions, in liaison with the partnership established with another school, are bringing about necessary improvements. These are beginning to improve aspects of teaching, assessment, the curriculum and leadership and management.

Pupils' satisfactory progress is the result of satisfactory teaching and learning, although there is some good teaching in the school, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) and make learning enjoyable. Sometimes, what pupils are expected to learn is unclear and too little account is taken of the wide ability range in each class. As a result, in some lessons there is a lack of challenge and work is too easy which leads to some boredom. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by skilled teaching assistants, although procedures to identify those pupils have lacked rigour and a few pupils have not received the support they needed. Marking is sound and generally provides pupils with guidance on what they have done well. The school has recently introduced a system to track the progress of pupils from year to year and this has the capacity to provide accurate information and set challenging targets for pupils.

The good curriculum is a strength of the school. It is considerably enriched through a variety of clubs and visits. In particular, sporting activities help pupils understand the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and encouragement to eat healthy snacks is well promoted by the school council. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are good overall despite the limitations of the small, temporary room in which the Nursery and Reception children learn: a purpose-built unit is due to open next term. Those children learn well because they are provided with innovative activities and staff are very skilled in encouraging children to explore, investigate and improve their ability to talk. For example, tasting samosas and talking about other cultures.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that expectations of what pupils are to learn are explicit in all lessons and that opportunities are used well to review learning and achievement in well planned discussions at the end of a lesson.
- Match work to the needs of all pupils so that they are consistently challenged to achieve as well as they are capable and that they enjoy learning.
- Implement a rigorous system of monitoring and support to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all pupils make good progress.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout school based on the results of national tests for the past few years. The inspection confirms this judgement. The small numbers of pupils in each year group means that comparisons with national averages need to be made with caution. However, it is clear from the data that there has been a period of underachievement throughout Key Stage 2 and, to a lesser extent, in Key Stage 1 over the past three years due to frequent staff changes and too little checking of the quality of teaching and learning. There remains a lack of challenge for some able pupils, which is now being addressed successfully by additional support and challenge for those pupils through extension activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as most other pupils and the very small number of pupils from minority groups.

When children start school in the Nursery, standards are broadly average in all areas of learning. By the time they start in Year 1, standards are above what is typically expected of children this age. Standards were above average in the 2006 national tests in Year 2 and average in Year 6, although standards in English were slightly below the national average. More able pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done. The early success of actions taken by the school to improve the quality of teaching means that many pupils now make good progress in most lessons as a result of good teaching and this ensures an eagerness in which they participate and enjoy learning. Indications are that standards have improved overall this year, most obviously in Year 5 and 6 as a result of consistently good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, are good. Pupils enjoy their small, friendly school because they know everyone and feel safe and secure. Recent enrichment of sporting provision and music contributes further to their enjoyment and keeping fit. Decisions are taken by the school council that effectively help pupils to prepare for roles in later life as well as taking on responsibilities around the school. Support is provided for younger pupils by trained play leaders who plan and organise games for them to play at lunchtimes and this ensures that they are actively engaged in outdoor activity and cooperate well. Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around school, although at times a low level of disruption takes place when pupils are bored in lessons. Pupils beamed with pride as they received their praise awards: they really appreciate the public recognition of their efforts. Attendance is average. Moments of spirituality were very well reflected in pupils' joyful singing in assembly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features. ICT is used effectively to aid demonstrations and explanations and engages pupils well. A team of

well qualified and experienced teaching assistants contribute effectively to supporting groups of pupils and, in some cases, working in partnership with the teacher. There is sometimes a lack of clarity in sharing what pupils are expected to learn and opportunities to review what has been learned are not taken with sufficient rigour to inform the next steps in learning. The quality of marking is improving and giving pupils better information about what they need to do to improve, although this is inconsistent at the moment. The teaching is typically successful in meeting the diverse needs of pupils in each class, because checks on planning and advice to teachers have improved provision for pupils of different abilities. Again, there are still some inconsistencies which are being tackled.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with examples of very effective teamwork between the two staff. Children are given plenty of opportunities to work independently, effectively supported and challenged when required. Children take responsibility for learning and are productive in their work, for example in learning phonics using the school's computers. An improvised outdoor area provides space and time to learn outside, although it is restricted for physical development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is enriched effectively by a range of in school and out of school activities, many introduced in the past two terms. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and ICT; planning shows that skills in literacy and numeracy are used in other subjects. This contributes well in embedding learning of the basic skills, whilst also supporting pupils' enjoyment of learning. A lot of attention has been given to promoting healthy lifestyles through improvements to school meals and the provision of healthy snacks, games and physical education. Links with the local secondary school are developing pupils' physical skills particularly well and preparing them well for their next stage of schooling.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are good. The headteacher has introduced a comprehensive system to track the progress of individual pupils and identify those who are underachieving or need additional help. This is in the early stages of implementation. Day-by-day, pupils are well cared for and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with additional support once they have been identified as needing this. Parents appreciate the recent steps taken to provide additional support for their children's additional needs. The safety and welfare of pupils are carefully considered and the pupils consequently feel safe in school. Safety checks take place prior to visits and arrangements to safeguard pupils are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Many of the actions planned to bring about improvements have only been in place for a short time. Although there is clear improvement, some of the systems are not yet fully embedded across the school. However, early signs are that the headteacher is well supported by a senior team whose skills and talents have the

capacity to improve the school under his direction. The systems to check the quality of teaching and learning are in the very early stages of implementation. Subject leaders have begun to do this through work checks of the quality of planning, pupils' work and discussions with pupils, but have not yet observed teaching and learning. This is a key priority for the headteacher that is planned to start with training for staff of both schools in the near future.

Governors have great confidence in the arrangements for the leadership of the school. Relationships with parents are generally good, although some parents have concerns about the changed arrangements for the leadership of the school. These concerns are being tackled by the headteacher. There has been a considerable turnover of staff and headteachers since the previous inspection. The school is now on a steady course to maintain the improvements put in place in the past two terms. Teamwork is strong and there is a shared determination to improve the school and to secure relationships with staff, parents and other schools. Self-evaluation is overly generous in some of its judgements, but identifies accurately most of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The actions planned are having a beneficial impact in enriching the curriculum and developing a strong staff team.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?	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.

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	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	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	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

9 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elwick Hall CofE Primary School, Hartlepool, TS27 3EG

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my two days at Elwick. You work hard, enjoy school and behave well. You are well prepared for your new school. Children in the Nursery and Reception class have a great time even in such a small classroom. They make really good progress. Most of the rest of you make satisfactory progress. Your parents told me that they are pleased with the difference your new headteacher is making and I agree that much has been done recently. You all mentioned the good provision for games and after-school clubs. There are many plans to make the school better for you – the new building for the Nursery and Reception will be ready very soon.

I have asked the school to give you a bit more guidance about what you have to learn and to spend time sharing what you have learned at the end of lessons. Many of your lessons are exciting and enjoyable but, sometimes, your work is not challenging enough; I hope you will continue to play your part by trying your best at all times.

I am confident that under the leadership of your new headteacher your school will continue to improve. Good luck to you all and I know you will continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector