

Easington Colliery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114210
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	289836
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Petts

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	474
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Burnip
Headteacher	Mr Thomas Weightman
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	Whickham Street Easington Colliery Peterlee County Durham SR8 3DJ
Telephone number	0191 5270293
Fax number	0191 5273563

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Easington Colliery is a much larger than average primary school situated in a former mining community. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is twice the national average. The number of pupils who move in and out of school at other than the normal times is above average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Pupils' attainment when they join the school is below average for their age and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school is part of an Excellence Cluster and has a Surestart Children's Centre on site.

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 with strengths that are appreciated by parents. The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and this is reflected in their behaviour. Parents praise the way staff are so easy to approach and are prompt to respond to worries or concerns. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' overall achievement is good and they make good overall progress. Children join Reception with below average attainment and make good progress because of good teaching so that close to three quarters of them reach the standards expected for their age by the time they are ready for Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average but the boys do not do as well as the girls in reading. Pupils make good overall progress in Key Stage 2 and standards are average and rising steadily. The girls make good progress but, as in Key Stage 1, the boys do not do as well in English as the girls. About a third of the pupils have learning difficulties and they make particularly good progress. The school expects that standards will be higher in English in Key Stage 2 as a result of imaginative improvements in teaching to encourage writing, especially boys' writing. The school also expects that a much higher proportion of pupils will exceed the standards expected for their age in the 2007 national tests. The inspection of lessons confirms that pupils are presently making good progress.

Teaching is good and some outstanding lessons were seen. A strength of the teaching is the high quality of planning, with learning objectives shared with pupils so that they know exactly what they are expected to do. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching staff know the children very well and tasks are exceptionally well matched to their ability and interests. This very successfully contributes to the children's confident and expressive early reading. Throughout the school, in the most challenging lessons, the work set for pupils is very demanding. Teaching areas are extremely well organised to stimulate and reinforce learning. A good curriculum makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development. Teaching is improving and new initiatives capture pupils' interest and motivate them to learn.

Excellent partnerships with other schools, the community and outside agencies greatly enhance the quality of what the school provides; for example, the positive impact of the Excellence Cluster and the Surestart Children's Centre. Improvements in the quality of care and support for pupils successfully contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils are responding positively to the many interesting and enjoyable opportunities available.

Leadership and management are good. Standards are rising in Key Stage 2 and the governors are committed to ensure that the school continues to improve. The school's self-evaluation is accurate although the monitoring of lessons does not evaluate clearly enough the effect of the school's new initiatives on teaching and pupils' progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards achieved by boys in English.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives in improving teaching and pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good overall progress from their below average starting points on joining the school and reach average standards in Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make consistently good progress throughout the school.

In Reception, the children make good progress as a result of good teaching and the great majority achieve the standards expected for children of their age. Standards are broadly average in Year 2, as shown by the results of national assessments, although the boys could do better in reading. The school is taking action to improve reading and, in Years 1 and 2, daily phonics sessions are resulting in better progress, with improved confidence and fluency. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and overall standards are average by the end of Year 6 and are rising, as shown by the results of the national tests. However, standards in English are lower than those in mathematics and science. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the strategies to extend the more able pupils were having a positive effect on their rate of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are aware of the value of healthy living and this has been recognised by the award of the nationally recognised Activemark Gold. Pupils understand how to make healthy choices at lunchtime. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; they are polite, considerate, courteous, and get on very well together. They say that they feel safe at school and that bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that any such incidents will always be dealt with promptly by staff. Staff work very hard to promote the value of good attendance but attendance remains broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Assemblies are inventive; for example, pupils were entranced by the excellent animated film made by pupils and screened in assembly. Pupils' views are listened to and acted upon: 'We just have to ask,' said a member of the School Committee. Pupils are keen to take responsibility; for example, as playground buddies looking after younger children, contributing to supervision at break and lunch times.

Exceptional cultural programmes, for example, links with the Sage Music Centre in Gateshead, allow pupils to acquire a range of music skills and have also enhanced independent learning skills. Pupils are made aware of cultures other than their own; for example, a visit by the Lions of Zululand inspired some very good artwork and sensitive writing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are very well planned and tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities; for example, the more able pupils read longer and more demanding texts than other pupils. Writing tasks are leading to improved sentence structure and grammar. In the Foundation Stage, tasks are exceptionally well matched to the children's abilities and result in very good progress; for example, in early reading. Teachers are making better use of computers to enhance the quality of pupils' writing, reflecting the school's efforts to raise standards of literacy. Pupils are told the objectives of lessons so that they know precisely what they are expected to learn. Thorough marking of pupils' work provides clear guidance for them to

improve. Teachers praise pupils for good work and this raises their confidence and self-esteem. Teachers provide challenging questions and work hard to improve literacy skills. The pace of lessons is too slow in some literacy lessons and this affects progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well organised and provides excellent opportunities to extend the pupils' learning outside lessons. The school is piloting a cross-curricular project in Year 5 called 'Cowboy Builders', which is having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of lessons and improving pupils' progress in English. External providers such as Creative Arts Specialists add to the richness of first-hand experiences. The school provides a wide range of sports, including skiing on an annual visit to Italy. Educational outings, such as visits to residential outdoor centres, help pupils to develop team skills, which, in turn, help to prepare them well for later life. Provision for information and communications technology is good and improving and increasingly applied across the curriculum to raise standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school takes good care of its pupils and provides well-targeted support. A very special feature of the social and emotional support for pupils is the Place 2 Be and Place to Talk, which are the work of the 'Excellence Cluster' partnership. As one parent remarked, they give children the opportunity to discuss how they feel. Learning support staff and 'Place 2 Be' staff play a key role in the support for pupils. Excellent links with outside agencies make a positive contribution to the care pupils receive; for example, through Surestart and the Extended Schools initiative. The school monitors pupils' progress effectively and those who show signs of falling behind are set targets and a timescale to boost their rate of progress. This is proving particularly effective in the case of boys. Measures are in place to safeguard children, which include robust routines for child protection, adult vetting and health and safety.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher play a crucial role in the promotion of a positive climate for learning and this is reflected in the learning environment and pupils' excellent behaviour and desire to learn. The staff ensure that all pupils are equally included in what the school provides. Governance is good; the governors are aware of the school's strengths and know what needs to be improved. The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is good. However, the monitoring of lessons is not yet penetrating enough to evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives being taken to improve teaching and their impact on pupils' progress. The school has made good progress in raising standards in science since the last inspection and overall standards are rising in Key Stage 2. Despite the shortcoming in the monitoring of lessons, when rising standards and improving quality of provision are taken into account, the school has a good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

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Annex A

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	2
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	3
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	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	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

Easington Colliery Primary School

Whickham Street

Easington Colliery

Nr Peterlee

County Durham

SR8 3DJ

14 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the very friendly welcome to your school and for being so polite and helpful when you met us. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, speaking with your staff and joining you in lessons and assembly.

This is what we most liked about your school:

- the way you enjoy your lessons and show interest in your learning
- your excellent behaviour and the way your headteacher and staff make sure good behaviour is recognised and rewarded
- the care and support of all staff to help you learn and behave in sensible, safe ways.

We think that some things would make your school even better:

- standards could be higher in English, especially those of the boys
- the staff have made a lot of improvements but need to check to make sure they are working well.

You can help your teachers by attending school regularly, listening carefully to staff and working as hard as you can. We hope you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts

Lead inspector