



Eccleston Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119310
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291380
Inspection date 9 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Doctors Lane
School category	Community		Eccleston, Chorley
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lancashire, PR7 5RA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01257 451114
Number on roll (school)	160	Fax number	01257 450570
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Alan Whittaker
		Headteacher	Mrs Liz Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school which serves an area that has little social or economic disadvantage. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. On entry to the school, the children's attainment is broadly average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also average. The school has gone through an extended period of disruption caused by senior staff changes, prolonged illness and falling rolls. This led to the provision by the local authority of support and monitoring of the school, which has now been greatly reduced.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which gives satisfactory value for money. There has been a steady rise in standards over recent years as a result of the headteacher's leadership and direction in the face of considerable staffing difficulties.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. The children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and reach broadly average standards for their age by the time they join Year 1. Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Standards are higher in reading and mathematics than in writing because of better marking of pupils' work and higher expectations in these areas. Also, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than English, such as history and geography, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory overall progress but some of these pupils make good progress and reach average standards in Year 6. Pupils identified as gifted and talented and the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress. Good links with outside agencies provide resources and expertise that help these pupils. As a result of this overall picture, pupils are well prepared for their future education and beyond.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but marking of pupils' written work does not consistently help them to improve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Above average attendance and good punctuality provide clear evidence of how much pupils enjoy school. Strong relationships between pupils and with staff help pupils to feel safe and secure. These important outcomes are the result of a caring ethos and the effective fostering of personal development, which also contribute to pupils' awareness of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and their contribution to the community.

The school's leadership and management are satisfactory although the leadership provided by the headteacher is good. The staffing difficulties the school has faced and the inability to appoint a deputy headteacher have hindered the school's development in the recent past. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and its plans for improvement are satisfactory and identify priorities correctly but the criteria for success are not clear or sharp enough. This is because they focus too much on the end of Key Stage 2 and not enough on the school as a whole; consequently, the expectations of teachers of other year groups are not high enough. Nevertheless, the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and its record of improvement show that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, giving pupils more practice for writing in other subjects, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Improve the teachers' marking of written work so that pupils understand how to raise the standard of their work.
- Ensure that the school's plans for improvement include all teachers and classes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory. The pupils make satisfactory progress; they join the school with average attainment and standards are usually above average by the time they are ready for secondary school. Nevertheless, standards could be higher still in writing.

In Reception, children make good overall progress and are well prepared for Key Stage 1. The children make good progress in the development of early reading and mathematics. In other areas of learning, they make satisfactory progress and reach expected standards. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average since 2003.

Standards are highest in reading and mathematics. In Years 2, 3 and 4 pupils do less well in writing because they have too few opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects and the teachers' marking of their written work does not show pupils clearly enough what they need to do to improve. Standards at the end of Year 6 are usually above average with no significant differences between those of girls and boys. The national test results have been rising for several years. However, the science results dipped in 2006 and the school is working to raise standards in this subject as a priority.

The current Year 6 pupils did well in their Year 2 tests four years ago and this is reflected in high and challenging targets for their 2007 tests. Pupils with learning difficulties, those identified as gifted and talented and the few from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The way pupils work and play together demonstrates their good social skills. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour is good. Pupils play safely and understand the importance of eating healthily. They enjoy school, attend regularly and develop good attitudes. This helps to prepare them well for the future. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of the school through the school council and in the responsibilities they undertake, such as those of library monitors. The effective 'buddy' system encourages older pupils to support younger ones at lunchtime. Strong relationships with adults and between pupils are based on mutual respect and illustrate the strongly supportive ethos of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are best in Reception and Year 2, where lessons are particularly well planned, learning objectives are clear, pupils know what they are expected to learn and work is accurately matched to the pupils' abilities. Marking is a matter for improvement because it fails to show pupils how to improve, especially in the pupils' written work. The teaching of writing is satisfactory in English lessons but the teachers do not give enough emphasis to practising writing in other subjects.

Throughout the school, classrooms are managed well and learning is rarely disrupted. Classroom assistants work effectively and support pupils well, especially the youngest or those with learning difficulties. A minority of parents have had concerns that staffing disruptions have adversely affected the amount and quality of homework, particularly in Year 4. Inspection evidence confirms that this has been successfully addressed by the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. In the Reception class, the children benefit from a good variety of learning activities and experiences. The curriculum is broadened by collaboration with other institutions, such as the development of modern foreign languages with a local secondary school. Pupils' personal development is promoted well by a balanced and relevant programme, which includes, for example, cycling proficiency tuition for Year 6. Pupils are taught about healthy eating and the dangers of drugs. A suitable range of visits and visitors is planned to supplement class teaching. The planned opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills are generally satisfactory in English and mathematics lessons but insufficient attention is given to apply and extend the pupils' writing in subjects such as history, geography and religious education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know and understand pupils and their families well. Procedures and practices for the safeguarding of pupils are in place. Attendance and behaviour are monitored effectively. Arrangements for children starting school in Reception are good and they settle quickly into school routines. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by the school and by collaboration between staff, parents and external agencies. Pupils' progress is monitored well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher provides good leadership by involving partners well in decision-making and evaluation by explaining, discussing and developing ideas with them. As a result, the previously high level of monitoring by the local authority is no longer necessary and governors and subject leaders are playing a more effective role than previously. Governance is satisfactory and the governing body is increasingly better informed and is now in a better position to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Though subject leadership has been adversely affected by staffing changes, the subject leaders are increasingly assuming greater responsibility for the raising of standards and improving provision.

Priorities for improvement are accurately identified, such as the raising of standards in science. A weakness of improvement planning is that the measures of success tend to focus on the results achieved in Year 6 rather than the setting of more challenging targets for all teachers and year groups.

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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?	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	2
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	2
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	2
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?	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?	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?	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	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

The Children

Ecclestone Primary School

Doctors Lane

Ecclestone

Chorley

Lancashire

PR7 5RA

9 January 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for the enjoyable day I spent in your school this week. Your warm welcome, courtesy and help were much appreciated. I would like to give special thanks to those who talked with me at various times.

What I really liked about your school:

- the support for pupils with learning difficulties
- your good attitudes, behaviour and the strong relationships you develop with each other and the adults
- the good attendance that shows your enjoyment of school
- the way that your studies are making a good contribution to your knowledge and understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles
- the school's caring ethos and your contribution to it
- the effective links set up with partners, such as those with the secondary school to support your learning in French
- the good arrangements for bringing the youngest children into the school and the good start they make.

I think that you need to improve your writing. I know that you will want to help your teachers in this by always doing your best work and reaching the targets set for you. I also think that the marking of your written work should show you more clearly how to improve. Finally, I think that the school's plans to improve concentrate on Year 6 and not enough on other classes.

The inspection team wishes you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector