



Eskdale Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122545
Local Authority NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Inspection number 292432
Inspection date 12 October 2006
Reporting inspector George Derby

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Eskdale Drive
School category	Community		Chilwell, Chilwell
Age range of pupils	7-11		Nottinghamshire NG9 5FN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0115 917 9272
Number on roll (school)	249	Fax number	0115 917 9273
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Sheila Foster
		Headteacher	Mr David Slee
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional inspector.

Description of the school

Eskdale Juniors is slightly larger than most schools. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are a lower than average number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to most schools. Pupils enter the school with knowledge, skills and understanding which are typical for their age. Major building work was being undertaken in the school at the time of the inspection. The school works with the local university, to support the development of reading and some aspects of writing in a number of local schools. The Local Authority regard this as a successful initiative and Eskdale is now regarded as a 'centrepiece' of effective advice and guidance to others.

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 excellent features where standards overall have been above average for many years. It is a popular school whose parents overwhelmingly support its work. As one parent wrote, 'The school is excellent. Congratulations....for truly teaching children, ensuring they have a good start in life'. Pupils' rate of progress and achievement are good. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the last inspection because of the rigorous way the headteacher and staff approach their work. Much effort is put into ensuring that they provide the best and teamwork in the school is excellent. The school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour and responding to their work is highly consistent. This all comes from the 'top'. It is a very well organised school that is effectively led and managed at all levels. It is a school which knows its own strengths and weaknesses and inspection findings agreed with its evaluation. It gives good value for money and is well placed to improve further. The school succeeds in its aims to reach high academic standards. It cares for and nurtures its pupils well so that they flourish. As a result pupils' personal development is excellent. The extremely positive and encouraging atmosphere within the school, the high expectations and the immense value staff place on pupils' views and opinions means that all pupils are fully included in the life of the school. Pupils know how to keep safe, healthy and make a positive contribution to the community through special programmes provided by the school. Pupils' behaviour, attitudes to work and rates of attendance are exceptional. As one pupil said, 'The school is a lovely place to be'. Good teaching results in lessons that are exciting, effectively planned and give the pupils much responsibility for their own learning. The good curriculum adds much to this. It is rich and vibrant, with excellent opportunities outside lessons for pupils to learn, play, develop physical stamina, and compete with others. Teachers' pay close attention to how pupils are learning and thoroughly analyse what pupils have achieved. Those who find learning difficult are assessed early, provided with effective support and make good progress. The school's recent expansion of its tracking of pupils' progress to include analysis by group achievements has enabled it to successfully identify trends and patterns more easily from year to year. This development was prompted by a fall over two years in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing when standards in mathematics and science remained high. The school has traditionally excelled in reading and creative aspects of writing but less attention was given to punctuation and grammar. The school's plan to rectify this position is robust and appropriate. Although governance is sound with the chair giving particularly good support, governors have not focussed sufficiently on standards and achievement. Consequently they have not been in a position to effectively challenge the school to justify why it does what it does.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils reach the standards they are capable of in all aspects of their written work.
- Ensure that governors have an accurate understanding of standards and achievement so that they are in a position to challenge and hold the school to account for its work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results in the Year 6 national tests are traditionally above average. Standards attained in lessons and seen through pupils' work in books is above average with a significant proportion which is high. Achievement overall is good for all pupils, including those who find learning difficult. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher than expected Level 5, in the Year 6 national tests in mathematics and science in recent years has been high. The proportion reaching this standard in English has been nearer to average. The school's main emphasis has been to enable pupils to express thoughts and ideas clearly and eloquently. The use of grammar and punctuation has had less attention. This approach has paid off in aspects such as creative writing where work is often of exceptional quality. However, it has meant that pupils have not scored as highly as they could in the writing tests at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely positive about school and their lessons. They say that learning is fun. They have an excellent understanding about keeping safe, healthy, and making a contribution to the community. These things are promoted strongly in school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding as a result. Pupils value what their teachers do for them. They try exceptionally hard and concentrate exceedingly well on their work, knowing that the effort they put in will reap results. They get on extremely well with one another and say that behaviour is excellent; they are right. The school's excellent ethos promotes pupils' understanding of knowing right from wrong superbly. By the time pupils are nearing the end of their time in the school, they are mature young people who are able to express an opinion, listen carefully to the views of others and respond effectively, considering all aspects of what is said. They are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons because teachers make them interesting and exciting. In order to ensure that pupils' learning is always at the heart of what they do, teachers rigorously plan their lessons. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. What the whole class is to learn is clearly stated at the beginning of the lesson and pupils are regularly reminded of their targets. Staff clearly identify what different groups will do, but do not always state clearly enough what the groups should achieve by the end of lessons. Computers are used well to support learning and in one lesson the highly effective use of the interactive whiteboard made a very good impact on the way the pupils demonstrated what they had learned. Assessment of pupils' progress

is thorough. Better use of this information and tracking of progress is helping the school to focus on promoting pupils' learning more effectively. Occasionally in lessons, opportunities are missed to talk with pupils about the errors they have made in their writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the increasingly good links made between subjects, such as in history and English. There is a good 'threading through' of local, national and multicultural aspects of life, providing them with a rich range of opportunities to learn. A good range of visits and visitors make the curriculum come alive. The broadening of the curriculum to include Spanish gives pupils a deeper understanding of life in another country. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well, especially when pupils have access to the internet to research topics. The curriculum is well balanced and puts appropriate emphasis on pupils' personal development, keeping safe and staying healthy, such as through the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) programme, and the national Healthy Schools programme. The project for teaching reading and writing (TRAWL) has had a significant positive impact on pupils' creative writing skills and in the books and essays they write. Staff provide an exceptional range of activities outside lessons. These support the pupils' learning, cultural understanding, health and safety and work in the community very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The personal care and support for pupils is good. Pupils are safeguarded effectively from harm. Guidance for daily safety is excellent; pupils have taken full account of the constantly changing building site safety arrangements as a result. Support for pupils' personal development is particularly strong. Academic support, particularly through well established personal target setting, is good. Pupils who find learning difficult are well supported through careful tracking of their progress and support from teaching assistants and the special educational needs coordinator. While the school uses a wealth of data from various assessment activities some aspects of its work have not been dealt quickly enough. The situation has improved and the school is well placed to benefit from the steps taken to introduce an enhanced system of monitoring the impact of actions taken on pupils' academic performance and welfare.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A high commitment to the pupils and their achievements, excellent teamwork, very careful planning and good communication are the ingredients which make this school well led and managed. In addition, its commitment to pupils all round development is exceptional. The headteacher's determination for high standards and his rigorous approach is seen in the very thorough way in which subject leaders manage their

subjects, through their analyses of pupils' work, monitoring the quality of teaching and discussions with pupils. The school has not responded as quickly as it could have to the weaknesses in writing. However, it is in the process of rectifying this by using an improved system of tracking pupils' progress and through a good development plan. The delay in rectifying the weakness in writing is due in part to the lack of challenge provided by governors. Governors offer good practical support but due to illness and inexperience of newly appointed members, the governing body has not kept abreast of trends and patterns in attainment closely enough.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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	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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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.

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	2
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

13 October 2006 Dear Pupils Eskdale Junior School, Eskdale Drive, Chilwell, Beeston, Nottinghamshire, NG9 5EN What a good school you have! You were very keen to tell me this and thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Your enthusiasm for the work you do and your teachers is infectious and it is clear that you enjoy school immensely. I agree with your positive views about what you are taught. Your teachers do this well. The good range of activities in school and excellent range outside lessons adds much to your learning. This is especially true for your cultural development and the opportunities you have for being part of the school and wider community. A major achievement for the school and for you is the way you develop morally, socially, emotionally and personally. This is outstanding. You learn and achieve well. Achievement in mathematics and science, particularly the number of you who reach the higher Level 5, is impressive. Your creative writing is excellent and I was immensely impressed with some of the novels you have written. I have asked the school to do two things to make it even better: - Put greater emphasis on all aspects of writing, including grammar, punctuation and structure. - Enable your governors to keep a closer eye on making sure that you reach the standards you are capable of and that they ask more questions so that they know how well the school is doing. Best wishes George Derby (Lead inspector)