

Ellesmere Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123365
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292640
Inspection date	9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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	362
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	P M McLaughlin
Headteacher	R J Pallett
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002
School address	Elson Road Ellesmere SY12 0BE
Telephone number	01691 622288
Fax number	01691 624893

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Ellesmere Primary School is larger than average. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below the expected level, especially in language and communication skills. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

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 some outstanding features. The school is well led and managed and the headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is extremely well supported by senior staff in efforts to continue improving pupils' achievement. Other staff are fully committed to the school's efforts to raise standards and readily work to improve their teaching, leadership and management skills. The capacity for further improvement is good.

In Years 2 and 6, standards are average overall and achievement is good. In the Foundation Stage, children exceed the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development and reach the expected levels in the other areas of learning. The school accurately identified the reasons for recent fluctuations in pupils' performance, notably by boys, and made successful improvements to teaching and the curriculum to deal with this. However, a weakness remains in that pupils' spelling is occasionally careless and inaccurate.

Teaching is good, with strengths in how well teachers plan work to meet pupils' learning needs and engage the interest and attention of all pupils. Marking is consistently good and gives pupils a very clear idea of their progress and what they need to do to improve their work. However, teachers do not consistently follow up on what they have told pupils to do to improve, so pupils are not always sure about whether their work is improving or not. The curriculum is good, with effective recent changes to engage boys' interest and effort. The range of activities to extend the curriculum is excellent, as is the range of out-of-school activities and clubs.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour and attitudes to school are excellent and they really enjoy school. They help and support each other willingly and behave safely and considerately. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, have healthy eating habits and take part in the wide range of physical activities available. They are well prepared for future life. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal, social and emotional development is extremely good. Care, support and guidance are excellent, with thorough procedures to ensure pupils are safe and secure. All staff provide sensitive, careful support and care for pupils. The quality of academic guidance is very good. Pupils' progress is checked thoroughly and there are improving links between the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to help teachers plan the curriculum so that it is closely matched to pupils' needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in English by making sure that pupils learn to spell accurately.
- Make sure that pupils are consistently informed about whether they are making progress in the areas they have been advised to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average and despite there being few able pupils on entry to the Foundation Stage, a small minority of pupils reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good.

There were some differences between subjects in the end of Years 2 and 6 national tests in 2006, mainly owing to underachievement by a small minority of boys. The school responded rapidly to this, successfully modifying the curriculum and improving teaching to improve all

pupils' interest and motivation. Boys and girls now achieve equally well, and especially so in science, where a focus on investigative work has been particularly effective.

There is still a little underachievement in English. A small minority of pupils in most classes, and across the ability range, are careless and inaccurate with their spelling. This stretches to common words and also new vocabulary that pupils copy incorrectly. The school is aware of this and is at the early stages of developing a whole-school approach to spelling.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress as a result of good support and being involved in producing their individual targets.

In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress because of a very sharp focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills and their personal, social and emotional skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely good and pupils have a good knowledge of different cultures and beliefs. Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other and adults, and their behaviour and attitudes are exceptionally good in lessons and around school. There are very few instances of bullying or racism and pupils have no fears of such incidents.

Pupils really enjoy school and their attendance is good. They join in the wide range of activities available and have an extremely good grasp of the importance of regular physical activity. Their understanding of the necessity of a healthy diet is very good.

Pupils are ready to take on responsibilities. For example, 'VIPs' (Very Important Pupils) look after visitors and 'IT Tekkies' help with computers. Pupils contribute to improving the school's facilities and resources effectively through the school council. Pupils are involved in raising money for several charities.

Pupils are well prepared for their secondary education and future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and main school contribute effectively to pupils' good achievement. Typically, lessons are planned extremely well, matching tasks carefully to all pupils' needs and deliberately focusing on engaging boys through questioning, short-span activities and use of computers. The impact on all pupils' progress has been good. The pace of lessons is fast and the quality of support by teaching assistants, especially for pupils with learning difficulties, is good as a result of close collaboration with teachers when planning lessons.

Marking is good overall, with accurate indications to pupils about what they achieve and clear direction about what they need to do next. Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies; occasional careless or inaccurate spelling is missed and when teachers tell pupils how to improve their work, they do not consistently tell pupils whether this aspect of their work is improving.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and improving. Recent work to link subjects has proved to be effective in engaging boys in their learning, and this work continues. The range of activities to extend the curriculum is excellent, as is the range of activities taking place out of school. There is a very wide range of sports, visits, clubs, an annual drama production and other activities that pupils readily join or take part in. These activities have a positive impact on pupils' personal development, helping them to consider other people's feelings and to take on responsibilities effectively. The school has excellent links with other schools and the local community that further widen pupils' experiences.

In the two Foundation Stage classes, the curriculum is also excellent. Staff carefully evaluate what children's needs are and make sure that planned activities are carefully balanced to support children's personal and social development as well as their acquisition of other skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has thoroughly effective procedures to ensure pupils are safe in school. Procedures to deal with racism and bullying are extremely good. There are outstanding relationships between adults and pupils and this means that pupils feel absolutely secure in going to any adult if they have any concerns. The school's efforts to deal with poor attendance recorded at the time of the previous inspection are effective and attendance has improved.

The quality of academic guidance is very good, and is based on a thorough system of tracking pupils' performance. Pupils know how well they are doing and what their targets for improvement are.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides particularly powerful direction for the school's work. He has a strong team of senior staff and other teachers with responsibilities who are focused on pupils' achievement becoming even better. They are also determined to improve their own skills of leadership and management.

The quality of self-evaluation is good, although the school tends to err on the generous side when judging the quality of some aspects of its provision and outcomes. The school has a clear view of what it needs to do to improve and takes action on noted weaknesses quickly. For example, reasons for the underachievement by some boys were established and changes to the curriculum and teaching made to address them. This was successful and boys' achievement improved, and the school is continuing to monitor the situation to ensure improvements are sustained.

Governance is good, with some real strengths. Governors are very supportive, and are well informed about the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. Governors have a wide range of expertise and recognise the need to make sure they are trained to be fully effective. They fully meet their statutory obligations.

The school has excellent links with support agencies, schools and community organisations. These play a significant role in ensuring pupils' well-being, widening the curriculum and contributing to pupils' personal development. Parents' and pupils' views are sought, treated seriously and acted on.

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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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	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?	1

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	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	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

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Ellesmere Primary School, Elson Road, Ellesmere, Shropshire SY12 9EU

I really enjoyed the day I spent at your school. You made me feel very welcome and I spoke with quite a number of you in a meeting, in lessons and around the school. You were very friendly and helpful and you gave me a clear view of your school and why you like it so much.

These are the main things I found out about your school:

- Your school gives you a good and improving education.
- All of the staff and especially the headteacher, are working really hard to make sure this stays a good school and becomes an even better one.
- You make good progress in all of your subjects.
- Teaching is good. Teachers make sure the work you do is really what you need to make good progress.
- Your behaviour and attitudes in lessons and around school are outstanding.
- The school has an excellent range of activities, trips and clubs which you really enjoy.
- Many of you take on responsibilities willingly.
- The school takes exceptionally good care of you. It is very safe, and nearly all of you eat healthily and take part in physical activities.

To improve things further, I have asked the school to:

- make sure you do even better in English by spelling carefully and accurately
- make sure that when you are told what you need to do to improve your work, that teachers tell you how well you are improving.

With best wishes

T Wheatley Lead Inspector