

Ecclesfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107001
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309285
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Kirk
Headteacher	Mrs S Barton
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	High Street Ecclesfield Sheffield South Yorkshire S35 9UD
Telephone number	0114 2467396
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and takes half of its pupils from outside the normal catchment area. The large majority of pupils are White British. About 4% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has experienced some significant staff turbulence recently and a new deputy headteacher started in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and it provides satisfactory value for money. The significant disruption caused by many staff changes now appears to be over, allowing the school to move forward with confidence.

The headteacher shows a strong determination to raise standards by Year 6. With the support of consultants from the local authority and a relatively new leadership team, a range of strategies are being implemented. These are beginning to pay dividends. New staff are supporting the headteacher well and working effectively as a team. Everyone is equally determined to raise standards. Improving the quality of teaching and learning is seen, rightly, as the best way forward.

Standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 are improving. They are broadly average but could still be better. The school is working hard to raise standards and there are encouraging signs that it is succeeding. Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in Reception and Years 1 and 2 because of the good quality of teaching. However, progress is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, where the quality of teaching is more variable. In some lessons, the activities planned are not matched closely to pupils' capabilities and consequently provide insufficient challenge to enable pupils to learn well enough to make the best possible progress. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good relationships exist between pupils and their teachers and most pupils now have a good attitude towards their work.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Attendance is average. Pupils are courteous and respectful and behaviour is good and no longer the problem it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all ages show a good understanding of how to adopt healthy lifestyles. The curriculum is satisfactory as is the quality of care, guidance and support. Staff know their pupils well and most set challenging individual targets for them in English and mathematics. The caring support and clear guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables these pupils to make satisfactory and sometimes better progress.

Parents' views about the school are mostly positive. Many think that the Home School Association does a fantastic job and say their children love school. 'It is a shame to leave such a lovely school at the end of Year 6,' was a typical comment. A small minority have concerns about the high staff turnover with experienced teachers being replaced with new staff, the quality of leadership and home-school relationships. Most of their concerns are unfounded. The school is aware of parents' views and the need to create a better level of understanding by involving them much more in the life of the school and in their children's education.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Subject leaders are developing their management roles but are not yet sufficiently involved in evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and how well pupils are achieving in order to raise standards. Governors are very supportive and keen to help to evaluate school performance in order to bring about further improvement although they recognise that they are still in the early stages of developing this aspect of their work. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age. Their speaking skills are generally well developed but reading and writing skills are a particular weakness for many. The good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is the result of very effective leadership and management and as a consequence, children make good progress. All staff work efficiently as a team to meet the needs of every child in their care. There is a strong emphasis on providing writing opportunities in all activities and children quickly adapt to and use the style adopted by the school. By the end of their Reception year, many children achieve the nationally expected goals in all areas of learning, with a number exceeding them. Staff make learning fun so that children concentrate well on their chosen activities, listen attentively and are keen to answer questions. Occasionally, opportunities to encourage speaking skills are missed. Children enjoy the challenging activities provided for them, such as deciding where to place a set number of spots on a ladybird and following instructions on planting beans. The spacious outdoor area is underdeveloped. This has been identified by the school and is a current priority for improvement. However, children do get some opportunity to play and learn outdoors and enjoy such activities as sitting in the talk tent or pedalling around traffic cones. Staff take special care to protect children from the effects of the sun as there is no shade.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently challenging for all pupils to enable them to learn to the best of their ability.
- Develop the role of subject leaders and governors so that they are more involved in evaluating the school's performance and helping to raise standards.
- Strengthen the partnership between home and school to further enhance pupils' learning and parents' involvement in the life of the school.

A small proportion of the 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

By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress for most pupils from their starting points in Year 1. The better performance in reading reflects the strong emphasis the school gives to promoting reading skills. In 2007, overall standards by Year 6 were much lower than in previous years, being significantly below average with the weakest performance in mathematics. In addition, significantly fewer more able pupils than expected attained above average standards in mathematics and science. This underachievement was partly due to staffing changes and the effect they had on the quality of teaching and attitude to learning for some of the pupils. The school, supported by the local authority, has responded well to the situation and implemented a range of measures to improve teaching and drive up standards. Evidence suggests that the decline has been halted. School data shows that most pupils, including the more able in Years 3 to 6, are making satisfactory progress. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in

mathematics and science but remain below average in English largely due to weaknesses in writing skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and have a positive attitude to learning. Overall, pupils' enjoyment of school is good. Pupils are courteous and show respect to teachers, visitors and to each other. They increasingly display their knowledge of healthy lifestyles by choosing healthy food options and taking part in sports activities. Pupils respond eagerly to opportunities to contribute to their school environment, the immediate locality and the wider community. For example, the school council is very active and pupils take part in community events such as the May Queen festival. Pupils' progress in developing the key skills that they will need in later life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk, and teachers plan activities which fully involve pupils and challenge them appropriately. In these lessons, all pupils are clear about what is expected of them and enjoy their learning. Some outstanding practice was seen. For example, in one lesson, pupils were captivated by the challenging task of listing all the possible combinations for the number of medals won by three countries and pupils were extremely well supported by staff. Where the teaching is less effective, opportunities are lost to extend pupils' learning and thinking through effective questioning and discussion. Activities lack excitement and challenge which is matched appropriately to pupils' needs. Marking of work is inconsistent. Although it usually celebrates effort and achievement, it does not always specify clearly enough the next steps of learning, so pupils are not sure how to improve. The amount and quality of homework also varies considerably between classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. The curriculum for English has been revised but work has only recently started on revising the curriculum for mathematics with a view to raising standards. The strong and successful emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills is a significant factor in their enjoyment of school and their good personal development and well-being. The school is beginning to develop a more creative curriculum with interesting links across subjects. In some classes, computers are not used effectively enough to support and enhance learning. Pupils enthuse about visits to places of interest. These experiences enrich and connect their learning, bringing it alive. As one child said of a visit to Whirlow Farm, 'It joins into science and is really good fun!' A good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place, and meet current government requirements. The high staff turnover has had implications for training to keep all staff up to date with aspects such as first aid but the school is managing this well. Pastoral support is good and includes displays which highlight the importance of good attendance, good relationships, and how to tackle issues such as bullying. Good opportunities are provided in assemblies for pupils to reflect and empathise with others. Staff ensure that most pupils know, understand and comply with expectations of behaviour, and relate well to their teachers and to each other. Academic guidance and support is less well developed. New systems have been introduced for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. However, these have still to be embedded fully to ensure that all staff are using data consistently in their planning to meet the needs of all pupils and to intervene swiftly when pupils are in danger of missing their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The experienced headteacher and her relatively new leadership team know their school well through accurate self-evaluation. Despite significant staffing difficulties they have maintained a strong vision for the future. Recently introduced initiatives have not yet had time to have a significant impact on the school's performance. Nevertheless, teaching has improved as a result of successful action and leaders and managers are determined to improve pupils' progress further at Key Stage 2. The drive to raise standards and accelerate progress is now explicit in the school's improvement plan, which provides a valuable tool for future improvement. Subject leaders are becoming more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school but their contribution to raising standards is underdeveloped. Dedicated and committed governors bring valuable expertise and are beginning to develop their role in supporting areas for improvement. At present, governors are over-reliant on school staff for information about how well the school is performing.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We found your personal development to be good and most other aspects of school to be satisfactory.

We really enjoyed talking to your school council. It is clear that you look after each other well and care a lot for your school. You have worked very hard with the help of your teachers to improve behaviour, so you can all work well in lessons. Thank you for helping each other to behave so well. We were also impressed by the good start that you all have in Reception with lots of interesting things to do indoors and outdoors. It was funny to see some of you waving your fingers at one of your helpers when giving her instructions on how to plant the beans. Everyone in school knows a lot about how to keep fit and healthy and it was lovely to see you celebrating each other's achievements in assembly.

I can see that you get on well with your headteacher and like your teachers a lot. They are very friendly and want the best for you. We want them to help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to reach higher standards and make faster progress in English, mathematics and science. We have asked them to make sure they always give you work that really challenges you and makes each of you concentrate and think! You can help by working hard on your targets and talking to each other and your teachers about what you are learning. This will help you do better, especially in the juniors. We want the teachers in charge of each subject, and all the school governors, to help your headteacher and the senior staff to make this happen, so yours becomes a good school. We have also asked the school to involve your parents more, so they can help you achieve well too. Please thank them for their comments. We know the school is keen to listen to their views.

Keep working hard, doing your best and enjoying yourselves. Thank you again for being so polite, welcoming and helpful.