

# Ecclesall Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107025
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	309291
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Swallow

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	146
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Colin Jacobs
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Wendy Wheldon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	High Storrs Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S11 7LG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 2663137
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Ecclesall is smaller than most infant schools and draws its children predominantly from a socially and economically advantaged suburb of Sheffield. The vast majority of the children are of White British heritage. Very few are eligible for free school meals, and the proportion requiring support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. The school has the national Healthy School Award and Activemark accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This school gives children an outstanding education. It fully meets its aim to ensure that starting school is an enjoyable and positive experience. By the time they leave, children have developed excellent language and mathematical skills and a very strong appreciation of the creative arts and the written word. Parents say that their children really enjoy school because it offers a 'perfect environment for children to play and learn'.

The outstanding Foundation Stage provides an exciting range of activities, high quality teaching of early reading and writing skills and constructive outdoor play. Parents hold this provision in very high regard. They rightly feel it is a 'rewarding place to learn and develop.' Standards by the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high in English and mathematics. This represents outstanding progress, given that children's starting points are in line with expectations, and not as high as at the time of the last inspection. The reason for this is because more children are entering school with learning difficulties and with under-developed reading and writing skills. The school is gaining a reputation for building on children's natural aptitudes for listening and speaking. Teachers enrich children's vocabulary through a wide range of visual stimuli and creative experiences that enable them swiftly to become good readers and effective writers. Standards in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are equally strong. The outstanding quality of teaching brings learning alive and provides exciting environments and contexts for children to experiment and practise without fear of failure. Children's perception is that 'learning is fun' and so behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They are highly attentive in lessons and unafraid to ask for help when they need it.

Children's outstanding personal development is a product of friendly and supportive relationships with all staff. Their mature independence and awareness of others mean that they act safely and show respect for their environment. Their enthusiasm for sport and knowledge of how food affects their brains, help them to live healthily. Working in teams is highly valued and children develop a real sense of the pleasure to be gained from contributing to their school and local communities. Outstanding collaborative skills, exceptionally high literacy and numeracy skills, well-developed ICT skills, and an understanding that work can be enjoyable, prepare them extremely well for their future lives. Outstanding activities cater fully for their different needs and interests, offering a wide range of cultural and multicultural experiences, as well as additional music and sporting opportunities. Parents are very appreciative of the excellent levels of care, guidance and support that the school provides. They believe that the teaching staff are very attentive to the children's needs and that 'the school goes beyond its duties'. Children say that they enjoy coming to school because 'All the adults look after you really well.' As a result, attendance is above average.

Outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff have ensured continuous improvement since the last inspection. Governance is good. The school evaluates itself well, but has been too cautious in making overall judgements about the quality of its work. Systems to check children's performance are effective. However, they are not sufficiently fine-tuned to allow a clear picture of how well individual groups are achieving. Ecclesall plays a leading role in working with other schools and has outstanding capacity to go on improving. It provides excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Parents say that the way the school 'integrates and welcomes new children is excellent'. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding, helping children to achieve very well. They are very well cared for and their health and safety are of paramount importance. Children enter the Reception year from a wide range of private settings, although many have had no experience of nursery school. Although their speaking and listening skills are above expectations, reading and writing skills are less well developed, and are below expected starting points. As a result, overall skills on entry are generally in line with national expectations. Outstanding teaching helps children to settle quickly and rapidly develop positive attitudes. They make excellent progress, notably in their personal and social development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time they enter Year 1, their reading, writing and mathematical skills have significantly improved and the vast majority are achieving beyond the expected learning goals for this age. Children are very keen to learn and behave exceptionally well. They respond very well to the careful planning of creative and interesting activities, both inside and outside, which take account of their different needs. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Adults work as a highly effective team, continuously and comprehensively assessing how well children are doing. The information gained is used skilfully to provide appropriate challenge in all of the areas of learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Refine current systems for gathering information on children's performance to obtain a clearer picture of how well individual groups are achieving throughout the school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

In Years 1 and 2 children make exceptional progress. By the end of Year 2, they attain significantly above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Higher attaining children attain very well, particularly in reading and writing. For the first time this year, boys outperformed girls significantly at the highest level in mathematics. The school is working hard to increase girls' outcomes here and specific strategies are already making a positive impact. The most recent progress information from the school indicates that current Year 2 children are again set to attain exceptionally high standards next summer. The school sets challenging targets to raise attainment and is very successful in achieving them. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well. This is because teachers assess their needs very accurately and provide them with well-designed, challenging tasks, with high quality support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Children's personal development is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They quickly learn the 'Golden Rules' and begin to think and act for themselves. By Year 2, they are articulate and responsible young people with a strong sense of fair play and support for each other. They thoroughly enjoy all the school has to offer and apply themselves with gusto to their tasks. Children work exceptionally well together and show high levels of independence as when solving problems about a party, or making stained glass windows.

They clearly find learning to be challenging and very enjoyable, and therefore attendance is good. Children say that they feel adults 'help and care for them,' and that rare instances of misbehaviour are dealt with quickly. As a result, they all feel extremely safe inside and outside of school. They reflect very sensitively about the world around them and appreciate the influence of different faiths on the ways in which people lead their lives. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are immensely proud of their roles as school councillors. They feel their views are taken seriously and are pleased with changes they have brought about, such as 'playground friends' and the 'outside classroom.' They take seriously their monitoring roles for fruit distribution and the playground trolley, and participate enthusiastically in city-wide events such as the Children's festival, fundraising for local charities and involvement with local environment groups. They have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle, and are exceptionally well prepared for their future lives through their very well developed literacy, mathematical and ICT skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching and learning are outstanding because teachers have an excellent understanding of how children learn. There is a real feeling of everyone working together to create a highly secure environment in which children are free to experiment, discuss ideas or solve problems with a partner. Lessons are lively, interesting and fun, with a strong practical element. Interactive technology, digital microscopes and cameras, computers and practical resources are used effectively to stimulate and engage all children. Teaching assistants give outstanding support. This means that children are always fully involved and highly attentive. Marking and oral feedback are very good, leaving children clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Such arrangements are particularly effective in English and mathematics where children know the key points that make a really good imaginative story and where they can correct themselves quickly when counting backwards using a 'number wheel'. Relationships are excellent. Teachers link very effectively with parents and carers to enable them to support their children's learning at home. As a result, children are very confident in their capacity to learn and to succeed.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is lively and richly creative while giving due weight to the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT. It is well planned around the needs of all learners. Learning is stimulating and fun, resulting in high quality work in many subjects, including art and music. French is taught throughout the school. Excellent use is made of visitors to the school and visits, within and beyond the community, to extend children's learning. The wide range of clubs and activities enhances children's well-being and increases their enjoyment of learning. The linking of subjects through specific themes brings about fascinating opportunities to make felt rugs, Eid cards, to take part in 'Bollywood' dancing and to learn about the giant hornets of Japan. The excellent personal, social and health education programme helps children to explore their feelings and relationships with others, as well as to understand how to stay safe and the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have very well conceived work and support programmes.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

High quality care for children underpins the philosophy of the school. Parents believe that the well-being of their children is 'at the heart of everything that the school does'. Children know to whom they can turn if they need help. There is a wide range of strategies in place to support all children and these extend to helping parents as well. Arrangements for safeguarding are very robust. There are increasingly strong links with the neighbouring junior school to ensure children transfer seamlessly. Systems to support academic progress are outstanding and lead to highly effective learning. The detailed individual children's progress files, personal learning goals and end of year numerical targets are shared very effectively with parents and carers. Specific information evenings help them to support their children's learning outside of school. From an early age, all children are involved in checking they are completing their work and in assessing how well they are doing.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's excellent leadership is a key factor in promoting high quality outcomes and in inspiring staff to pursue relentlessly the best possible achievements for all children. Her vision for providing rich learning experiences and stimulating learning environments has created a vibrant working community. The senior leadership team shares her passion for developing curious and enthusiastic young learners and for pushing up standards. Teachers are keen to try out new ideas to help children learn even more effectively and to share what they have gained from their many professional development opportunities. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are very effective. The school knows itself very well, although it has been over cautious about making overall judgements about the quality of its work. Planning identifies the right priorities for improvement, but does not always precisely describe intended outcomes. Systems to check the children's performance made by all children are regular and detailed, but not yet sufficiently fine-tuned to identify quickly how well individual groups of children are achieving. The school enjoys a positive reputation within the local community, excellent links with local authority services and other education providers, and plays a leading role in its work with other schools. Governors are very supportive and ambitious. They are increasingly confident in understanding the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you all and seeing how very well you all get on together.

How are Cherry and Blossom? They are very lucky to live in such a caring and friendly environment. I thought that all the different spaces in your school, your classrooms and the outside classroom, were bright and stimulating. I was very impressed by the care and pride that you take in your work and which your teachers are very keen to display on the walls. My discussions with you at lunchtime, during lessons and around the school, were very helpful. You speak and behave in a confident manner and show caring attitudes to each other. You have a very good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and your singing is wonderful. I still keep humming the tune 'Eat a rainbow every day!' It is very clear how much you all enjoy being at Ecclesall.

I agree with you that your school gives you an outstanding education. You told me how much you enjoy your lessons and the fun that you have when visitors come into your classrooms with all kinds of interesting objects. Your teachers are good at making lessons enjoyable and give you lots of opportunities to work on practical tasks, to make sure that you learn. Most of you are achieving very well and reaching exceptionally high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by the time you leave school. This is because your school is very well led and managed. All the staff care about you and want you to do as well as you can.

Part of my job is to point out what schools should do to improve. Your headteacher and the other adults have just about thought of everything, with good arrangements for checking how well you are all doing. I have recommended that they improve these arrangements to help them be able to spot more quickly how well individual groups of children, such as boys and girls, are achieving in various subjects.

I very much hope that you continue to enjoy your time at school and that you continue to work and play hard. I wish you every success in the future.