

Ecclesall Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 107105 |
| Local Authority | Sheffield |
| Inspection number | 309315 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 April 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Susan Bowles HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 362 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Gordon Barrett |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lorna Culloden |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 May 2005 |
| School address | Ringinglow Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S11 7PQ |
| Telephone number | 114 2361992 |
| Fax number | 114 2351627 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ecclesall is a large voluntary controlled junior school. Pupils are mainly from a White British background but about 18% of pupils come from a broad range of different ethnic backgrounds and an increasing number are in the early stages of acquiring English.

The socio-economic profile of the area is above average. Attainment on entry to the school in Year 3 is above average. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also average.

The school has recently been awarded the Artsmark Gold and Investors in People awards for the second time. It offers out of school study support and care as part of an extended learning partnership.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ecclesall Church of England Junior School is a satisfactory school. Pupils' academic results are significantly above average. The school includes pupils with a wide range of ability, and all groups make satisfactory progress, compared with similar pupils in similar schools. Overall, pupils start in Year 3 with above average attainment and leave with above average test results. There is room for improvement in the proportion of pupils who reach the highest levels by the end of Year 6.

Attendance is good and pupils develop well as individuals because they have lots of opportunities to develop interests and take responsibility, and many take them up with enthusiasm. However, pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Occasional low level misbehaviour occurs in lessons which fail to fully engage some pupils, particularly boys. The curriculum and teaching and learning are satisfactory, with positive relationships and a good range of activities, but there is in some classrooms a lack of progressive challenge to match the pupils' needs. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory with strong features, including the additional support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the guidance teachers give through their feedback on work does not always give pupils a clear enough idea of how to do better.

The school has recently entered a new era under new leadership. Much effort is being applied to developing strengths and accelerating improvement, though it is too early to judge the impact. Plans for improving the school are being refreshed and need to be clearer about the steps to be taken. Effective tracking of pupils' progress is developing. There is regular monitoring to check quality, but feedback to staff needs to become sharper about the improvements expected.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning so that all pupils are challenged and make good progress.
- Provide rigorous feedback for staff on how to improve their work.
- Give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that plans for improvement are clear about how change will happen.

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

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory.

By the end of Year 6, the standards demonstrated in national tests are above average overall. Work seen across a wide range of subjects was often good and sometimes exceptional. Many pupils start in Year 3 with high levels of prior attainment, so the above average outcomes in Year 6 represent the expected rate of progress, rather than a good one. This has been the pattern for several years, but last year there was a significant dip in the progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science. This mostly affected the middle and more able groups of pupils. The school's challenging targets for the number of Level 5 grades in English or mathematics were missed by some distance. Those with lower prior attainment, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, continued to make satisfactory progress. Pupils

from minority ethnic backgrounds made better progress than their peers in the school. The generally satisfactory pattern of achievement is repeated across year groups. It was reflected in the progress seen in lessons, which varied but was overall satisfactory.

Three years ago, the previous inspection report noted similar underachievement, linked to weaknesses in marking and planning. Weaknesses in these areas have not been fully eradicated, and explain why achievement is still satisfactory. The school has accurately identified specific groups where progress needs to accelerate, including Year 3 and boys. Recent efforts to improve provision, for example in teaching writing, are having some positive impact on the quality of work. The school's progress tracking, which is becoming more effective, indicates that this year, students are making satisfactory progress in Years 3, 4 and 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is good. The pupils regularly take part in a good range of physical exercise, including popular extra activities, and they show good understanding of their nutritional choices and the importance of adopting health lifestyles. Pupils behave safely about the school. Those spoken to say they know who to turn to when bullying crops up, and trust adults to deal with problems. There are opportunities for all to take responsibility, and pupils in general respect the house points and captain systems. Several voiced their appreciation for the way 'buddies' help them through difficult times. Pupils feel that, through the school council, they make a positive difference to the school and wider community, and they can show the effect they have had, for example, on making the school more ecologically responsible. The pupils' high standards, and their opportunities to learn about the workplace, mean they are well prepared to play a useful part in the economy and society. However, some opportunities to develop their skills in collaborative group work and independent learning are missed.

Despite good spiritual, social and cultural development, pupils' behaviour is no better than satisfactory and this limits the enjoyment of learning. They behave with dignity in formal events such as assembly, and are reflective. They sometimes show consideration and good manners. But some, more frequently boys, show a disappointing lack of application, diligence and self-control when lessons do not challenge and engage them. Then they are slow to get on with their work, interrupt teachers and occasionally disrupt the learning and enjoyment of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, which is why pupils achieve in a satisfactory manner. Planning includes a good range of learning opportunities, but is not always rigorous enough to meet the needs of more able pupils. This shows in a lack of effective differentiation or challenge, sometimes connected to weaker subject knowledge. At times, teachers do not use information about pupils' progress well to set work that meets the different needs of pupils. The lack of challenge evident in some classrooms leads to some low level disruptions when pupils are bored or frustrated. This is occasionally exacerbated by poor classroom management. Relationships are good and result in most pupils having the confidence to make contributions to class and group discussions. However, sometimes, this eagerness to be heard is to the detriment of others in the class when pupils insist on talking through others. The less attentive

pupils sometimes do not know what they are to learn and how to set about doing so. Questioning is too often of the closed type, limiting the opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening, and, crucially, thinking. As a result, in reality, the execution of some lessons does not live up to the intentions.

In the best lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to impart an enthusiasm for the subject through inspiring and well-managed activities. For example, a mathematics lesson encouraged independent problem solving through well-managed speaking and listening work; pupils referenced the learning material for themselves and discussed their problem-solving strategies thoughtfully, only asking adults for help when they had formed lucid questions. When reviewing a science experiment, two teachers elicited wonder from a group of 60 pupils through the imaginative use of a visualiser to give a magnified view of materials the class had been experimenting with. Skilled questioning enabled the pupils to observe, compare and hypothesize. In a lesson on extended narrative writing, pupils understood clearly the high expectations of them. Resources supported them in practising new skills without restricting creativity, and the skilful use of adapted resources by the teaching assistant meant pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities shared in the good progress made. It was evident from their books that, as one said, 'hard work is normal', and marking left them all in no doubt about the next steps they needed to take.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets all requirements. Teaching promotes the basic skills of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory progress because the curriculum planning does not always take sufficient account of progression or the varied needs of pupils. This leads at times to a lack of suitable challenge, even when activities are intended to be exciting. Currently, progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is impaired by the lack of resources available. Although staff are keen to use ICT to support learning and are now familiar with the use of interactive whiteboards, this subject lacks a plan with clearly defined starting points and routes for progression and challenge, drawing on best practice.

The wide range of enrichment activities makes a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and motivation. Trips to places of educational interest, such as the Imperial War Museum, and residential visits effectively help pupils by giving them a stimulating context for their learning. There is good take-up and enjoyment of the many extra-curricular activities, which include badminton, netball, jazz dancing and chess. The school plays an active part in an extended learning partnership and a sports partnership. A high percentage of pupils learn to play a musical instrument and the school promotes this aspect of the curriculum by encouraging the pupils to play in the school band and sing in the choir.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' care, support and guidance are satisfactory, with strengths in the care and support which more vulnerable pupils are given. As a consequence, these pupils feel safe and confident and that they can ask for help and advice whenever necessary. Effective additional support for all those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well managed. This support outside the classroom is not yet always being translated well into the mainstream class, where work is too often set at the level which most pupils can reach. This can result in a learning environment

which limits progress. Teachers clearly know their pupils well but the academic guidance they give pupils has only a satisfactory impact on their progress. Pupils know the levels they should aim for and their personal targets. However, the feedback given through marking varies; comments seen range from the precise and constructive to the bland and congratulatory.

The senior staff and governing body have a strong commitment to ensuring the school environment is safe, secure and well maintained and take appropriate steps to minimise risks. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff are fully aware of the guidelines. Risk assessments are carried out regularly within the school and are undertaken for all visits.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Two experienced members of the school staff have recently taken over the leadership of the school following the departure of the previous headteacher and a member of the senior management team. The new leadership team is developing a clearer understanding of the priorities for improvement. Though the school's self-evaluation judgements were over generous, the leadership has shown it is now in a position to make a rigorous self-appraisal and take appropriate action.

Regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has been introduced. Firmer direction and follow up of targets set are needed to ensure improvement. A new system for tracking pupils' progress has recently started, but teachers are not currently well placed to make use of the information. The plan for improving the school is being refreshed. At this stage plans lack clarity about how the objectives will be achieved, or how progress will be evaluated. Subject leaders are usefully involved in monitoring quality and in discussing improvement. A partnership with a secondary school brings teachers the chance to observe an expert teaching a foreign language, and this has raised standards. This is one of several examples of links with partners, locally and abroad, which enhance pupils' opportunities for learning.

Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities conscientiously and are suitably informed. They are developing a better understanding of how the school is striving to raise achievement. Since the previous inspection, accommodation and resources have been improved, though space for work and play is still cramped. Parents, though mostly pleased with the school, understandably retain some concerns about the site and pupils' behaviour and progress.

Progress on raising achievement has been no better than satisfactory, despite committed effort. Though marking is being monitored, this has not ensured good quality everywhere. Teachers' planning, including for homework, still does not result in good challenge for all. Expectations about good behaviour by learners are not consistently promoted. The strong commitment to inclusion is evident in many aspects of the school's life and much appreciated by some parents. However, the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory, as the school does not ensure good progress by all pupils, including some of those with particular needs, such as the increasing number with limited English, or the many who start with high standards.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| 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? | 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

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| 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**

Inspection of Ecclesall Church of England Junior School, Sheffield, S11 7PQ

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we recently visited your school. Our conversations with you and our study of your work were helpful and enjoyable, and we are grateful to the many parents who sent us their views, too. I am now writing to let you know what we found.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education with some good features. You attend school regularly and, when you do your best, your work often shows high quality. You grow into capable young people, making the most of the many good opportunities to develop your interests. You take on responsibilities for your school community and the wider world with enthusiasm, and appreciate the good care the school offers you.

Test results have shown that pupils at your school have made the expected progress over their time in the school. To make sure that you all do as well as you can, some things need to be done even better, and we have asked the school to draw up clear plans for this. Your teachers need to make sure that each one of you is really challenged in all your work. Sometimes they need to give you clearer guidance about how to make your work better. Some of you need to concentrate and work harder. Especially when you are not busy and interested, some of you do not behave well.

You can all play your part in improving your school, and I hope you will want to. I would like to wish you all the best for the future.