

# Eccleston CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111349
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cheshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	310573
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	91
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr E Gittins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Adam Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Eaton Road Eccleston Chester Cheshire CH4 9HD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01244 981000
<b>Fax number</b>	01244 674839

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## Introduction

The school was inspected by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Pupils attend this small village school from quite a wide area. Only just over a quarter live in the immediate area. A majority come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who are entitled to free school meals, who come from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language are below average. A significant proportion of pupils leave at the end of Year 2 or Year 5 to be privately educated. The headteacher was appointed in 2007 after a period of acting headship. The school has an Eco Bronze Award and an Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This school provides the pupils with a satisfactory education. Some aspects of its work are good. It is because pupils are so well looked after that they feel safe, secure and valued. They develop well as young citizens, caring considerably for the environment and willingly taking on responsibilities around the school. The school council's enthusiasm for and considerable contribution to the Eco Bronze Award is testament to their determination to persuade the school community to take action to avoid wasting valuable resources. Pupils contribute significantly to the warm family atmosphere that parents value highly. They 'look out' for each other, develop very positive relationships and enthusiastically celebrate each other's achievements. Although pupils show considerable independence personally, the opportunities to be equally independent as learners are more limited. This is especially so for the more able pupils. It is a contributing factor to pupils' overall academic achievement being satisfactory rather than good. Pupils' standards are broadly average. Teaching staff are knowledgeable and have very good relationships with pupils, which engenders a positive atmosphere. However, some lessons do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to make decisions, take responsibility for their own learning or to assess their own work and progress or that of others.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a number of visits out of school that link well with aspects of pupils' learning. For example, a visit to Chester Museum and contacts with the local church promote pupils' cultural and spiritual development well.

The school has been through some difficult times recently that have impacted negatively on its ability to move forward as quickly as it would have wished. Two key members of staff have had unavoidable lengthy absences. This has caused an inevitable lack of continuity in learning for some pupils, especially in the Reception and Year 1/2 classes. It has also inhibited leaders' ability to forge ahead with initiatives designed to bring about the necessary improvements in pupils' achievement and in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Despite this, the headteacher has a clear view of what needs to improve. He has implemented several systems that are beginning to have a positive impact on the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, in further enriching the curriculum and in harnessing the expertise of parents and the local community to help pupils learn more effectively and to widen their horizons. In the face of the difficulties the school has experienced since the last inspection, it has made satisfactory improvement since then. The fact that the school rightly feels that it has a good capacity to improve persuaded it to judge much of its provision, including its overall effectiveness, as good. Currently, much of its work is satisfactory and improving. Despite the best efforts of staff, the restrictions in the accommodation both indoors and out mean that children in Reception do not receive their full entitlement to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter and leave the Reception class with skills that are above those expected nationally. A majority of children read competently by the time they enter Year 1 and have a secure grasp of number and ordering. They develop well emotionally and personally and become confident at speaking. The Foundation Stage is managed satisfactorily. Children are well cared for and their progress is assessed regularly and rigorously. They participate positively in the activities planned for them and are satisfactorily encouraged to take some responsibility for choosing tasks. However, this is not as consistent a feature as it should be and combined with significant

limitations in the accommodation available, means that children's overall progress in Reception is satisfactory rather than good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the achievement of all pupils throughout the school.
- Give pupils more opportunities to be involved in their own learning and to be responsible for assessing their own and others' progress.
- Improve the accommodation for the Reception children, especially the outdoor area, so that they receive their full entitlement to the Foundation Stage curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools where overall effectiveness is judged to be 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**

In this small school the number of pupils in each year group is much less than is usual. This, together with the significant numbers of pupils who leave the school mid-way through their primary education, means that there can be considerable fluctuations in overall performance from year to year. However, trends over the past few years indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress overall. School data confirms this. Standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 have been broadly average over the last two years. In Year 2, this year, pupils are attaining well above average standards especially in mathematics. In Year 6, pupils are on track to achieve the national test targets set for them in English and mathematics. This means that pupils will have made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 and attained average standards. Pupils' progress in science is not as good as in English and mathematics because of insufficient practical work and opportunities to make decisions about how they will approach investigations. Some of the more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not always make the progress they should because the tasks they are set do not always sufficiently meet their needs. Those few pupils who use English as an additional language are adequately supported to make satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a strength of the school. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are very well mannered, polite and positive in their attitudes to learning. Pupils are aware of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and the school's Activemark is an indication of their involvement in physical pursuits. Despite a good theoretical understanding of healthy eating, the school council reports that not everyone puts this into practice when making choices at lunchtime! Pupils are very willing to help with jobs around the school and older ones look after younger ones sensitively. This cements relationships and adds considerably to the family atmosphere so prevalent in the school. Pupils' social and moral development is strong and they understand that people who have different traditions and faiths have an important contribution to make to their lives and to society. Although very capable of taking initiative and making decisions, these skills and attributes are not always effectively nurtured in lessons. Pupils attend very regularly and develop effective life skills such as punctuality and the ability to cooperate in teams. Their sound basic skills in English and mathematics mean they are adequately prepared for their next school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good. Strengths include very good relationships and effective classroom management. Teachers often make good use of resources, including information and communication technology, to clarify ideas or to promote pupils' keen interest. This was evident in a good Year 6 literacy lesson when a video clip of a popular film was used as a stimulus for debate and for diary writing. Staff mark pupils' work diligently, often providing pointers for improvement that pupils find useful and act upon. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection.

Linked closely to pupils' satisfactory learning are shortcomings in the degree to which the tasks set match pupils' needs. It is not just about the level of difficulty, but the nature of the tasks. Teachers, although moving in the right direction at the behest of the school's leadership, do not give pupils enough opportunities to make decisions about how they will learn or to check how well they are doing. This weakness is directly linked to pupils' slower achievement in science and in problem-solving in mathematics. Although the pace of lessons is often brisk, which moves pupils on and maintains their interest, teachers sometimes give pupils insufficient time to reflect on questions before teachers move on to someone else for the answer or give it themselves. This impacts negatively on pupils' ability to think through responses and to articulate their thoughts.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils. For the most able and those who need more support, it is improving although there is more work to be done in the detail and rigorous review of targets set for pupils. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the good range of out-of-class activities such as sporting and aesthetic pursuits. The range on offer to younger pupils is narrower and this is of concern to some parents, as is the lack of a consistent homework programme.

Pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim and to play a musical instrument. They enjoy visits out of school, especially residential visits. The school has begun to develop opportunities for pupils to better apply new skills to many areas and to strengthen opportunities for practical work. Visitors to the school provide expertise and a connection with the practical applications of what pupils learn. For example, a friend of the school regularly helps Year 5/6 pupils in science lessons and other visitors explain how their various occupations reflect school subjects. The programme to promote pupils' personal development and to make them aware of health and safety is effective.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils are very well looked after. This is much valued by parents, who unanimously applaud the school's induction arrangements into Reception and the degree to which their children feel safe and enjoy school. All staff play an important part in the secure and positive ethos. The partnership with the church also plays a crucial role in this and in promoting pupils' good spiritual development. All regulations as regards safeguarding pupils are in place and their

personal and emotional needs are provided for well. Recent, effective systems to track pupils' progress and to help identify where they are not making the expected progress are beginning to focus support and intervention more effectively. However, systems to identify the specific needs of the more able pupils and those who are gifted and talented are less well developed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future and has recently implemented strategies to help bring about improvement in standards and achievement and in the overall quality of teaching and learning. Some developments have been slower to impact than desired because of the disruption caused by the unavoidable staff absences. This has meant that day-to-day management has been more of a focus than strategic development. The situation is now resolved with a full complement of permanent staff. Some initiatives introduced are already impacting positively to improve provision. The willingness of staff to embrace change and the considerable support of parents and governors provide the school with a good capacity to improve further. Other key leaders make effective contributions to the school's management. Governors provide keen support. However, there is some lack of focus on the impact of middle managers' work on the quality of pupils' learning and their achievement.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	2
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2

<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>	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

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

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I very much enjoyed talking to you about your work and observing some of your lessons and assemblies.

At the moment, your school gives you a satisfactory education. However, it is improving and there are some things about it that are already good. It is clear that you behave very well in and out of the classroom and that you enjoy learning and involve yourselves in the clubs and other events that are organised for you. I was impressed with the school council's work in helping you gain the Eco Bronze Award, but I agree with its members that it needs to concentrate more on representing other pupils' ideas and concerns.

You are very well looked after. Many of you and your parents commented that this was something that was really appreciated. You all get on well together, with your teachers and the other adults who work with you. You attend school very regularly and are punctual, work confidently and when given the opportunity, work well in teams and independently.

One of the things I have asked the school to do to make it even better is to give all of you more opportunities to make choices about what and how you learn, and to be more involved in judging how well you and your friends are learning. I think this will help you all to make better progress, which is something else I have asked the school to make sure it does from now on.

Finally, the Reception classroom, and the outside area, which is really difficult to get at, are rather small and not really suitable for children to play in and learn properly. I have asked the school to improve both places so that children can do all the things they should in their time in the Reception class.

Thank you again for your welcome. Keep working hard and enjoy school.