

Ellwood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115552
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	311973
Inspection date	9 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Tom Simpson

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	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Gibbs
Headteacher	Tim Evans
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Bromley Road Ellwood Coleford GL16 7LY
Telephone number	01594 833232
Fax number	01594 833232

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

achievement in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and achievement in writing in Years 3 to 6, particularly for higher ability pupils

the quality of assessment procedures and their impact on academic guidance and on pupils' achievement

the role of school management at all levels in raising standards and promoting school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, analysis of the school's tracking and assessment data and discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. The views of parents were gathered from the returns of Ofsted's questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving a largely rural area. Nearly all the pupils come from a White British background. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The main difficulty experienced by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities relates to delayed language skills. Recent awards received by the school include the Healthy Schools award, the Activemark and Extended Schools status.

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 a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a significant number of good features and few weaknesses, and is very popular with parents. Visitors are immediately impressed by the warm, friendly and caring atmosphere which is a key part of the school's very inclusive ethos. Academic standards are broadly average and are supported well by the provision of a broad and enriched curriculum and outstanding pastoral care. Virtually all the parents who returned the Ofsted questionnaire were satisfied or very satisfied with the provision the school makes for their children. Typical of the observations written on questionnaires was the comment, 'I am very pleased with Ellwood School, and find the staff very friendly, approachable and helpful.'

One of the strongest aspects of the school is the way that pupils are very well known to staff as individuals and their wider needs recognised and effectively catered for. Consequently, the pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their personal development is good. They are well behaved, both in lessons and at play. A reflection of the extent to which they feel safe at school was the comment made to the inspector by a Year 6 pupil: 'This is a safe environment as you know everybody, everybody knows you and problems can be sorted out quickly.' Pupils greatly enjoy the many opportunities they have to contribute to the school and wider communities. Older pupils, for example, love supporting younger ones through the 'buddy' system. Members of the active school council are proud of the contribution they have made to improving the school's external environment. Pupils also enjoy contributing to local events and to charities such as Christian Aid. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in sporting and other physical exercise. The school gymnastic club, for instance, is a regular trophy winner. During the inspection week, Year 6 pupils took part in a drugs awareness day. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils are thoughtful and respect each other's views. Most are developing a strong sense of empathy. Their cultural development is supported well through links with schools both abroad and in more urban, multi-ethnic areas of this country. Pupils had visited a mosque just prior to the inspection. They are gaining satisfactory basic skills and are, therefore, soundly prepared for their future lives.

Achievement, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is sound throughout the school. Some pupils with delayed language development make good progress when, for example, they are receiving good quality support from teaching assistants to enhance their literacy skills. Attainment on entry is a little below the expected levels, although it does vary from year to year. Children make sound progress during their time in the Reception class. There are particular strengths in aspects of their personal, social and emotional development, which means that they are appropriately prepared to begin the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make sound progress as they proceed through the rest of the school and, by the time they leave, their standards are average. However, standards in writing are a relative weakness throughout the school with higher ability pupils, in particular, not doing as well as they could. The school is not entirely certain about the reasons for this. However, a number of strategies for improvement, involving in some cases specialists from the local authority, have been put in place and these are already having some positive impact.

One of the strengths of the good curriculum is the way that it is enriched by a great many out-of-lesson activities. These include a wide range of sports, and musical activities such as African drumming. This is having a positive impact on pupils' personal development as well as

enhancing their love of learning. The school participates in a good range of local events, including an annual music festival, and pupils have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. Good links with other local schools include support from the local secondary school for French and physical education. The school has recognised that information and communication technology is not used enough to develop pupils' writing skills and is currently working on strategies to ameliorate this.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are examples of good teaching in all key stages. One of the main strengths of the teaching at the school is the very positive and effective pupil management. This supports good behaviour, positive attitudes, and relationships that are very good at all levels. Another strength of the teaching is the good variety of methods employed. This motivates the pupils and makes them want to learn. Members of the school council, for instance, told the inspector that 'teachers make lessons exciting'. However, pupils' learning is being held back by weaknesses in the use of assessment. A rigorous and accessible system for tracking pupils' progress has recently been implemented. This is beginning to enable the school to identify pupils who are not doing as well as they might, and ensure that work set for pupils in lessons is consistently well matched to their needs. However, it is still not developed to the extent where it is quickly identifying individual and groups of pupils, including the more able, who are underachieving in different areas of the curriculum. This means that extra support is not always provided where it is needed.

Care, guidance and support are good overall and the level of personal care and guidance is outstanding. A system of academic target setting in literacy and numeracy is well established. Pupils spoken to by the inspector were familiar with their targets and were clear about what they had to do to improve. The school is now in the process of developing its target-setting procedures even further in order to cater for the specific needs of those pupils who are gifted and talented. Rigorous procedures for health and safety, child protection and safe staff recruitment are in place. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are particular strengths in the proactive leadership provided by the headteacher. He is highly respected by staff, parents and pupils and is passionate about all aspects of the school. All staff are highly committed to improving the school and raising standards further and a strong culture of self-evaluation exists. For example, weaknesses in standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 were identified, appropriate action was taken and standards have risen. Standards in literacy are also rising as a result of the school's recognition of some areas of weakness. The governors are very supportive and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and developmental areas. Some aspects of its monitoring role are, however, currently underdeveloped and are appropriately under review. The school has improved well since the last inspection. Standards, for example, have risen significantly. This shows its good capacity to improve further in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The children make sound progress during the Reception Year and learn to socialise well with the other children. As a result they are suitably prepared for the rest of their schooling. Their skills in communication, language and literacy have been a weakness in the past but are stronger this year. There are currently, however, some relative weaknesses in aspects of their mathematical development. The children are provided with a relevant and enriched curriculum which means that they enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes while they are there. For example, they work and play well with one another. They are provided with attractive, stimulating and

well equipped internal and external teaching areas and are taught soundly. The children are well cared for and supported by all the adults who work with them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that school leaders' monitoring identifies why writing, especially for higher ability pupils, is not better, and they put in place measures to further raise standards.
- Ensure that assessment and tracking data are used more effectively to identify and provide support for any pupils who may be underachieving.

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.

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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?	2
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 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	1
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ellwood Primary School, Coleford GL16 7LY

Thank you for making me so welcome at your school. I enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. I want particularly to thank those of you who gave up part of your lunch break to speak with me. I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that there are several strengths.

Here are some of the things I found.

- You behave well and get on really well with one another.
- You are developing other good personal skills that are important for later life.
- You are very well cared for by the adults in the school.
- You are provided with a good curriculum and are given lots of interesting things to do in, and outside of, lessons.
- Teaching is often good and you are making satisfactory progress in your work.
- The headteacher and other staff are working hard to make the school even better.
- All pupils are included well in all the school's activities.

Here is what I have asked the school to do now:

- Make sure that senior staff find out why writing, especially for those of you who learn faster, is not better and put in place ways of raising standards.
- Use the information gained from record keeping systems more efficiently to provide extra support for those of you who are not doing as well with your work as you could.

I hope that all of you will do your bit by continuing to work very hard.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Tom Simpson Lead Inspector