

Ernehale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122510
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314314
Inspection dates	25–26 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Patricia Cox

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debbie Stanley
Headteacher	Ms Anne Batley
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Derwent Crescent Arnold Nottingham NG5 6TA
Telephone number	0115 956 8008
Fax number	0115 956 8006

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular school is of average size. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Few pupils have a home language other than English. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well above average.

There have been considerable changes in staffing over the past two years including the appointment of a new headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has shown substantial improvement over the past two years and is well placed to build on these advances. It currently provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher has been the driving force behind the many initiatives that have shown a significant impact in a short time. She has built a well-focused team who share her single-minded determination to raise standards and ensure that pupils achieve their potential. The effective involvement of the local authority and the governing body has supported the school's rapid progress well. Through extremely thorough monitoring of the school's work, the senior management has a particularly good knowledge of the school. There is an extremely accurate understanding of where improvement is needed. Until recently, there was a considerable amount of underachievement. Staff have tackled the school's major shortcomings urgently, with a range of effective initiatives so that pupils are making much more rapid progress. Many parents agree, writing for example; 'The school has an excellent professional approach but is friendly.' 'I have noticed a good deal of change over the past two years...and most of this has been very positive.'

A key element of the school's success in raising standards is due to the staff's extremely hard work in ensuring that teaching is at least satisfactory and improving. Many of the teachers are relatively inexperienced but are developing their expertise well. There is an increasing amount of good practice, particularly in Year 6. Much of the focus has been on matching the pupils' work to their abilities and needs, although this practice is not yet entirely consistent. Previously, standards in English, mathematics and science had mainly been average, which, given pupils' starting points, demonstrated that their progress was poor. The most recent test results in 2007 were above average overall and pupils' achievement was satisfactory. These provisional figures demonstrate that achievement in reading was outstanding. Although satisfactory, achievement in writing was not as secure as in other subjects.

Pupils concentrate on their work because they are interested and increasingly challenged to do their best. The introduction of the assessment and target-setting procedures is helping them to understand how well they are doing. The school takes good care of its pupils' pastoral needs and they say that they feel safe and well looked after. The school has implemented effective strategies to improve their behaviour and their understanding of healthy living. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the good range of visits and visitors, and the many extracurricular activities. Their good personal development and satisfactory academic progress prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of education and their future lives. Teachers are increasingly making links across subjects to make the curriculum more exciting and relevant. A parent commented; 'Teachers are approachable and the school provides a stimulating environment for learning.' The school has rightly focused on raising standards in English and mathematics in the past eighteen months. However, there is not a clear overview of the curriculum as a whole and therefore senior managers cannot be certain that there are high expectations of achievement in all subjects. While there is much more to do to maintain and extend improvements, the school has a very good understanding of the priorities, including the curriculum, and well-developed plans to tackle them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards continue to rise, and achievement improves, particularly in writing.
- Build on the work already started to develop teachers' expertise, particularly in matching work to pupils' needs.

- Develop a clear overview of the curriculum so that it supports high expectations of pupils' achievement in all subjects.

A small proportion of schools whose 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

The Year 6 test results from 2002 to 2005 demonstrated that pupils' progress was poor in all core subjects. The school's focus on raising standards had some impact in 2006, when results improved. They were above average, although there was, again, some underachievement, particularly in mathematics. The new initiatives had a significant effect in 2007. The Year 6 test results were exceptionally high in English, well above average in mathematics, and average in science. The school exceeded its undemanding targets, but those for 2008 are more challenging. Pupils throughout the school now make satisfactory progress overall and standards are above, and often well above, those expected for their age. Pupils do better in some year groups, particularly in Year 6, and therefore the remaining underachievement is being eliminated. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities also make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. The school has identified the pupils who are gifted or talented but is at an early stage in ensuring that they reach their full potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. Their behaviour is good and is improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The strongest aspects of these are the moral and social elements, which have improved and are now good. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to learn about a wide range of cultural traditions and practices. Interesting and thought provoking school assemblies enhance pupils' moral and social development, and help them to reflect on and consider their own responsibilities as learners. Pupils know how to live healthy lives and are involved in many energetic activities. They are encouraged to eat healthily, although this is not always reflected in the contents of their lunch boxes. While pupils enjoy school a lot, they do not always take care in the presentation of their work. The school carefully monitors the occasional racist name calling, and the number of such incidents has significantly reduced. Members of the school council readily take responsibility. Pupils give sound support to the wider community through fund raising and participation in local events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

A strong feature of all lessons is the good relationships between staff and pupils so that lessons run smoothly. Teaching is enthusiastic and children say that teachers try to make their lessons fun. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are to learn in lessons and guide them to understand whether they have achieved those aims. The school shares and celebrates good classroom practice and teachers use an increasing range of effective teaching strategies. In many lessons, the pace is brisk and interesting activities are used to enthuse and involve pupils.

There is good subject knowledge, for example, some teachers are fluent in Spanish. Teachers use paired discussion well so that pupils may develop their ideas and consider them before answering. Questioning is often good, promoting thinking and developing pupils' understanding. However, these features are inconsistent and the pace of lessons occasionally slackens. Teachers sometimes try to cover too much in lessons and therefore pupils have insufficient time to complete their tasks. They do not use questioning often enough to involve all the pupils in the class, tending to take answers only from those who volunteer.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is successfully enhanced by a good range of educational visits and visitors, with interesting activities to further support their learning. These are greatly appreciated by the pupils and parents. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is improving, and the school uses a newly equipped ICT suite and lap top computers soundly to support learning. The school is developing cross-curricular links, and there are stimulating 'themed' weeks with a focus on a specific subject or topic. For example, pupils still speak excitedly about the design and technology 'invention week' last term. Spanish is taught and the school uses a specialist to teach music. However, there is not a clear overview of the curriculum and therefore the school cannot ensure appropriate coverage of all subjects over time. Provision for pupils who are gifted or talented is developing but is at an early stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral aspects of pupils' care, guidance and support are good. Staff and pupils work hard together to make the school a caring and welcoming place. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, well-being and safety, including child protection, are securely in place. Staff know pupils well and provide them with a good level of emotional and physical care. Pupils report that they feel safe and can talk to teachers about any issues and concerns. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and there are effective partnerships with schools and other agencies to support learning. Closer links with the neighbouring infant school are ensuring a more consistent experience for pupils. One parent commented that 'the links.....are excellent and help the transition into Year 3.' Academic guidance is satisfactory. Targets to support progress are becoming more challenging, and pupils are more fully engaged in knowing how well they are doing. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics. Regular and frequent assessments of pupils' progress are made to track the progress of individuals and to inform the target setting procedures. These strategies help to improve the progress of pupils who were underachieving. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and therefore pupils do not always have sufficient information about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A significant minority of parents is uncomfortable with the rapid change that has occurred at school, and the greater expectations being placed upon their children. Nevertheless, the recent initiatives have had a considerable impact on achievement in English, mathematics and science. The pupils say that they think the school is a better place, with more interesting lessons and things to do. There is an outstanding sense of teamwork and urgency in the school and a

recognition of the pupils' considerable potential. The governing body undertakes its duties well and is thoroughly involved in its life and work. The good range of expertise has been used well to support the school's improvement. The local authority has provided intensive support that has knitted closely with the school's own initiatives.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2
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	2
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	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	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

27 September 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ernehale Junior School, Derwent Crescent, Nottingham, NG5 6TA

It was good to meet you this week and thank you for making Mr Jones and me so welcome to your school. We enjoyed our discussions with you, and especially with the school council, who do their job so well. We thought you might like to know what we found out about your school.

We agree with you that your school is getting very much better. You said that behaviour is good now and we think you are right. We thought that you seemed to be enjoying school a lot and many of you said so. Because you and your teachers are working very hard, you're making much better progress with your work than you used to. You read very well but your writing isn't as good - so we've asked your teachers to work with you on improving it. It would help if you made an extra effort with your work.

We really liked the way that the teachers share the learning objectives with you and help you to use the success criteria so you'll know how well you've done. Your teachers are giving you different work according to which group you're in, but we think that they could do that a little better. So we've asked them to make sure that they get the work just right for you all the time. You told us, and we agree, that your teachers try hard to make your lessons interesting and that you particularly enjoy your Spanish lessons. We want them to do a bit more to make sure that you do your very best in every subject.

We know that if you continue to work hard, you'll do really well in every subject.

Our best wishes for the future

Pat Cox Lead Inspector