

Elkesley Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122640
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	314354
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Jones

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	94
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Adkin
Headteacher	Mrs Louise Tempest
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Headland Avenue Elkesley Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 8AQ

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2008
Inspection number	314354

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Elkesley, a former mining village of north Nottinghamshire. It is smaller than average and has four, mixed-age classes. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is broadly below average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools (Gold) Award and the Activemark for sport. A temporary headteacher is in post for this term and a new headteacher takes up post in January 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It has some important good features and some areas for further improvement. The acting headteacher has gained the commitment of her colleagues, and together they have worked hard to ensure the school has continued to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. She has identified areas for future development and devised useful action plans to deliver the improvements needed. The very large majority of parents are supportive of the school's work and are rightly appreciative of the care and guidance their children receive from the staff team. One, echoing the views of many others, said 'the school is a safe, secure and friendly place to be.' Another said 'the school is a well balanced place for my child to learn. When issues arise, teachers and governors are approachable and listen to my concerns.'

The school provides good care and guidance for pupils and meets their pastoral needs very effectively. Consequently, pupils' personal development is good. Most say they enjoy school. Pupils know how to keep safe. Lots of physical activity and work for the Healthy Schools Award has resulted in pupils making excellent healthy lifestyle choices. Pupils raise funds for charity and take responsibility through a wide range of roles offered in school. Academic guidance is satisfactory. A new system to check how well pupils are doing and to help teachers to challenge their learning has been established, but it is too soon to see the full impact of this work upon standards. Good personal skills, along with sound basic skills, prepare pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education and their future lives.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Standards fluctuate from year to year and between subjects, as does the rate of progress, which is satisfactory overall. Preliminary 2008 national test results for pupils in Year 6 indicate below average standards of writing with weaker progress than in reading and science for example, particularly for more able learners. Standards were average in mathematics and above average in science. Pupils who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult make good progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. During the inspection, an outstanding lesson was seen which included activities that challenged pupils whatever their ability. Pupils were clear about what they had to do and about how well they had done. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school; in some lessons, the pace of learning slows because pupils are not clear as to what they need to do. Planning does not effectively challenge or stimulate learners, especially the more able, to make the progress of which they are capable. The curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes good personal development and offers enrichment and enjoyment. However, the quality of curriculum planning is weakened because assessment information is not used consistently well to challenge learning and support progress. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It has good links with the local community and pupils have a growing awareness of what it means to live in a wider global community.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school do not ensure that governors focus on the key areas for improvement. However, the reformed governing body is enthusiastic and determined to deliver the improvements needed. The improvements that have been made, and the determination to do even better, demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further and that it offers sound value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because good leadership has ensured that provision has improved and expectations are high. Children settle quickly into this happy and stimulating environment, because the good support and knowledge of staff make children and their families feel valued, secure and confident. Children regularly enjoy creative and stimulating lessons, which have a major impact on their learning. Staff evaluate children's progress in learning and plan activities to meet their learning needs well. They give particular emphasis to developing personal, social and communication skills, and their personal development and well-being are good. Children are encouraged to play well independently, demonstrating a good understanding of what they are learning. Children enter the EYFS with skills that are below those expected, especially in their language, literacy and in mathematical development. Children make good progress because learning programmes, based on careful assessments, are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Consequently, by the time children enter Year 1 they achieve the standards expected of them. The school recognises the need to develop opportunities for outdoor learning and plans to improve this aspect of provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, particularly the more able, by ensuring that pupils make continuous progress in developing the required skills.
- Bring rigour to systems for monitoring and evaluation which leaders and managers at all levels can use effectively in order to drive forward school improvement.
- Develop more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons are as stimulating and challenging as the best.
- Make effective use of assessment information to plan challenging tasks, making learning objectives and success criteria clear.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make good progress in the EYFS to achieve the standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated over recent years. For example, in 2007 they were above average and fell to below average in 2008, in part because of the small numbers of pupils in each year. Evidence at the time of the inspection suggests that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making satisfactory progress and are on target to reach the standards expected of them when they leave Year 2. The standards pupils reach and the progress they make in Key Stage 2 has been steadily improving over recent years. In 2008, standards were broadly average overall. Pupils made better progress in science to reach above average standards. In reading and mathematics, standards were average. In writing however, the rate of progress made by more able learners was below average. At the time of the inspection, the rate of pupil progress was seen to vary between age groups but pupils are on target to achieve increasingly challenging targets by the end of Year 6. Pupils who need additional support or those who find learning more difficult are supported well to make better than expected progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Assembly and topic themes ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils take responsibility in a range of ways, for example as 'Playground Peacemakers' or in supporting the day-to-day running of the school. This supports their good personal development as learners, encourages them to make a significant contribution to the school community and helps to prepare them for their future lives. Behaviour is good, and pupils relate well on an individual basis to school staff. On occasions, a small minority of pupils cannot sustain appropriate behaviour without adult support. This support is effective and so learning is not impaired. Pupils say they enjoy school. They show that they have an excellent understanding of healthy eating, and they are aware of how to keep safe. The school works hard to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Pupils show that they value the views and opinions of others and they work harmoniously and collaboratively in their lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers promote positive relationships and appropriate behaviour in classrooms. As a consequence, most pupils enjoy learning and work hard. In the best lessons, activities are well planned and motivating. However, there are some lessons when pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged enough. The best lessons include practical activities that engage pupils and encourage them to learn for themselves and develop appropriate skills, such as a class of older pupils who were using similes and extended vocabulary to enhance writing. Such lessons proceed at a good pace and challenge all abilities. However, these principles are not consistently applied across school. Planning does not always result in clear and challenging learning objectives that pupils understand, or activities that challenge and engage pupils of all abilities. Opportunities to promote independent learning are not always taken and pupils do not get enough chance to practise what they have learned or to evaluate their success. Marking celebrates what pupils have achieved and is increasingly being used to inform pupils of the next steps in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched well. Pupils enjoy opportunities for educational visits, including a residential visit focusing on outdoor adventurous activities. Classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment and, together with the many themed weeks and activities enjoyed by pupils, help to bring learning alive. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities offered. Homework is completed regularly and contributes to pupils' progress. Personal, social and health education ensures pupils make healthy and safe choices. Links with the community, including the church, further enrich the curriculum and there are many opportunities to contribute beyond the school community. The school has rightly identified information and communication technology (ICT) as a focus for development, where pupils' skills are currently satisfactory. The library, an area of concern at the last inspection, has been successfully improved. Curriculum planning is inconsistent. In the best cases, it is thorough and provides opportunities for active and practical learning that challenge all abilities; in some instances, it

fails to link activities with learning objectives or provide enough challenge and so progress is slowed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to ensuring the safety, welfare and protection of pupils, and management procedures are robust in this regard. An appropriate focus is given to promoting pupils' personal, emotional and social development. The work of staff in promoting pupils' confidence and their ability to deal successfully with emotional or social issues is particularly notable. Everyone is included successfully in school life. Teachers and able teaching assistants support individuals and groups with learning difficulties well to ensure that they make good progress, and the school liaises effectively with outside agencies where appropriate. Academic guidance is satisfactory and getting better. Marking has improved and often engages learners in their work. The useful new tracking and target setting systems provide helpful information, but this is not used consistently to inform planning or challenge pupils to do as well as they can.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. She has led the staff well in analysing the school's strengths and weaknesses, and, in consultation with colleagues, has produced a useful plan to raise standards and challenge aspects of underachievement. The school has made a good start to improve systems to track pupils' progress, although it is too soon to see the full impact of this work and as a result, inconsistencies in pupil progress are still evident. There is still, however, too much variation in the rate of school improvement from year to year, class to class and subject to subject. The acting headteacher has successfully led the school in identifying areas for further improvement, such as writing. Governors have a satisfactory knowledge of how well the school is doing and its priorities for development. They are supportive of the school but do not systematically monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's progress; this prevents governors from acting in the role of critical friend and effectively holding school leaders to account for their work. Consequently, some leaders and managers at all levels do not have a clear enough picture of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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 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

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	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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Elkesley Primary and Nursery School, Elkesley DN22 8AQ

I was pleased to meet you and all the staff recently when I came to inspect your school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome, talking to me and helping me to find out about you and your school. I especially enjoyed watching you proudly and politely carry out your jobs which help to make your school such a pleasant place. Your school is satisfactory. Those who lead the school, the teachers and all the other adults do their best to look after and care for you. Your good behaviour in class helps you to learn. It is clear that you enjoy school. Your teachers and your friends help you to feel important and safe there.

The school is keen to find ways to help you do as well as you can. I have asked those who lead the school to make sure that you improve standards in writing, especially those of you who are more able. I have asked teachers to look very closely at the information they have about you to plan lessons that are challenging and stimulating. They should share more clearly with you what they want you to learn and how well you are doing. I have also asked the governors carefully to check how well the school is improving by looking very closely at your progress.

I am sure that everyone will do what they can to help. You can play your part by continuing to work hard, behaving well and by coming to school every day.

With best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead inspector