

Eccleston Mere Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	104783
Local Authority	St Helens
Inspection number	324101
Inspection date	10 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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)	296
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs I Pritchard
Headteacher	Mr P Friend
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Saleswood Avenue Eccleston St Helens Merseyside WA10 5NX
Telephone number	01744 678280
Fax number	01744 611364

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	10 March 2009
Inspection number	324101

Amended Report Addendum

The report has been amended in the following ways: change to description of school paragraph; change to overall effectiveness paragraph; change to point for improvement; change to healthy lifestyles judgement; change to pupils' letter.

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the systems for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school. The inspectors collected evidence from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes. The school was observed at work and discussions were held with the chair of governors, staff and pupils. Replies to the parents' questionnaires were also considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in similar detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average school is situated on the outskirts of St Helens. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased in recent years and is broadly average. The range of pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities is wide and includes a number of pupils with profound and multiple disabilities. Few pupils are of minority ethnic origin. Provision is made for the Early Years Foundation Stage through classes in Nursery and Reception. There is also a joint Reception and Year 1 class. The headteacher took up her post in September 2008 and is being mentored in her new role by an executive headteacher (the former headteacher of the school). The school is a designated National Support School. It supports other schools to develop their work and it holds numerous awards. These include the National Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the local Kitemark Award for the quality of the school's work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well both academically and in their personal development. Of particular note is the school's very successful work with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some pupils have multiple and profound difficulties, but the high quality of individual and small group programmes ensures that these pupils make outstanding progress. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work, in particular its commitment to inclusion, staff's dedication and their willingness to act upon parents' views. They also greatly appreciate the engaging curriculum and the interesting opportunities provided by the before- and after-school clubs. The school's success is reflected well in its numerous awards.

Children generally join the part-time Nursery with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, this varies considerably from year-to-year, largely dependent on the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They all make exceptional progress so that a substantial number join Year 1 with skills above those expected. Standards at the end of Year 2 are predominately above average. This is also the case at the end of Year 6 and in some instances they are higher. Given the severity of the learning difficulties and/or disabilities experienced by some pupils, this also represents outstanding progress over these key stages. Pupils achieve particularly well in English, where results rose again in 2008, and in mathematics, geography, history and art. Stunning displays exemplify pupils' high quality art and writing. Current Year 6 pupils are working at well above average levels in mathematics. Standards in science have lagged a little behind those reached in English and mathematics in recent years but the school's actions to develop pupils' investigative and recording skills further are bringing about improvements. For example, the school's assessment information indicates that more pupils are set to reach the above average Level 5 at the end of the current Year 6.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. Pupils have a highly developed awareness of how to stay safe. They have a very clear idea of the need to lead a healthy life, which is reflected in the high levels of pupils who regularly participate in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Older pupils are quick to help younger pupils, those who have difficulty in their movement and those waiting for a playmate at the 'buddy stop'. Pupils respond exceptionally well to spiritual elements in assemblies, singing hymns in perfect harmony. Their strong sense of community is amply reflected in their enthusiastic celebration in song of 'birthday girls or boys'. The school is providing increasing opportunities, for example, through the World Week, to enhance pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils are polite, confident and articulate. They make an exceptional contribution to the life of the school, as school councillors, prefects and play-leaders. Pupils' great enjoyment of their education is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and consistently good attendance. Their excellent achievement in the basic skills sets them up very well for their later lives.

The exceptional quality of the curriculum is the bedrock of pupils' development. Pupils greatly appreciate the way that the leaders carefully consider their individual needs and then target resources and staff expertise precisely to provide challenge and support. The excellent promotion of spelling and sentence structure provides a solid foundation for pupils' extended writing. Weekly enrichment afternoons offer older pupils excellent opportunities to make connections between different subjects and develop their creative skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Particular strengths are excellent relationships, teachers' consistent expectations for pupils' progress and very effective teamwork between teachers and their assistants. Teachers recap prior knowledge and share objectives for the lesson clearly so that all pupils know exactly what they have to learn. Teaching assistants, who have a keen understanding of the needs of the pupils they are supporting, including those with very complex needs, enable these pupils to participate fully and keep up with their learning. Teachers monitor pupils' written work very carefully and provide them with clear advice as to how they can improve it. Pupils respond very well to this high level of care and attention. They display excellent attitudes to their work, sustain concentration and work hard in lessons.

The school cares for, guides and supports its pupils exceptionally well. Close liaison with outside agencies helps to remove or reduce barriers to learning for pupils with identified needs. The pastoral mentor provides much valued help in resolving minor tiffs or overcoming family turmoil. Exceptional teamwork ensures pupils move smoothly between the various phases of their education. Suitable procedures promote child protection, safeguarding, health and safety. Highly effective tracking of pupils' progress directs the focus of support programmes and ensures that pupils meet their challenging targets.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The senior leadership team is highly experienced, motivated and provides very clear direction. It has strong aspirations for staff and pupils, to which they respond very well. Staff have excellent opportunities to share and develop their expertise through many contacts with other schools. Exceptional teamwork enables school leaders to acquire a highly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for further development. The school has recently expanded effectively its provision to promote the multicultural element of community cohesion. Governors are very committed to the school's continuing success and highly effective in their work. The school has maintained the outstanding quality of its provision and value for money since its previous inspection. It has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children flourish in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make excellent progress. This is because it is led and managed exceptionally well. The more able children in Reception attain well beyond the early learning goals, due to suitably challenging teaching. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities acquire the basic skills at a good rate. In response to staff's highly effective use of praise and recognition of children's achievements, all groups of children settle in quickly, enjoy school, behave exceptionally well and swiftly become confident learners. Detailed planning by the teachers is based on careful analysis of individuals' achievements and focuses closely on meeting the needs of all children. For example, recognition of some weaknesses in children's literacy skills led to extra emphasis being placed on the linking of letters to sounds. This initiative has borne fruit. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to develop children's fine motor skills through use of the interactive whiteboard or their understanding of number sequences through good quality questioning. Staff expertly guide children to take turns and share resources well to extend their thinking. The recently developed woodland area enhances the stimulating indoor area and enables staff to provide an even more exciting range of interlinked learning activities. These help the children to develop a real sense of independence and curiosity about the world around them.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has identified its strengths and relative weaknesses and has a clear plan to improve further. Within this framework it should ensure that it maintains its focus on science.

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
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

My colleague and I really enjoyed meeting and talking to you at your school. I was particularly impressed by your strong sense of togetherness at assembly. This came out very well in your enjoyment of the hymn singing and in your celebration of your fellow pupil's birthday.

You go to an outstanding school. All parts of its work are excellent. These are some of the things that really stood out.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a really good start. By the time you leave school in Year 6, your standards are above average and you have made excellent progress. Some of your writing and art work is amazing.
- Your personal development is outstanding. I was particularly struck by your enthusiasm for all parts of school life and the effort you put into your work. You look out for each other and try hard to ensure no one is left out.
- Staff look after you really well and provide challenging work to suit each pupil. No-one is overlooked, including those pupils with severe difficulties. This not only creates a happy atmosphere, but makes sure each of you gets the chance to do your best.
- The headteacher and her senior staff direct the work of the school extremely well. They are always trying very hard to add that little bit extra to make your learning even more enjoyable.
- The school knows what it does well and has a clear plan to improve things for you and help you do even better, particularly in science.

You can help by keeping up your good attendance and continuing to work hard.