

Eppleton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108796
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	324835
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	167
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	Mr Colin Richardson
Headteacher	Mr Tony Henderson
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring Tyne and Wear DH5 9AJ
Telephone number	0191 5536738
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Eppleton Primary School is smaller than most primary schools and the number of pupils on roll is declining. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in-line with the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, but in some year groups it is much higher than average. Although very few pupils have statements of special educational need the school caters for pupils with physical disabilities and some pupils have very significant needs. In some year groups, there are more boys than girls. The school provides before and after school care. Three classes are taught by pairs of teachers who share the job. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Eppleton Primary School is a good school. When pupils were asked to tell inspectors what they particularly liked about the school one boy replied that it is 'quality'. When asked to explain what he meant by this he described a school in which achievement is good, teachers are kind and helpful, resources are excellent and activities are interesting. This is an accurate view of the school and one which is shared by other pupils, parents and inspectors.

When pupils start school many can do less than is typically expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards at the end of both key stages are usually in line with national averages. However, in 2007 standards at the end of Key Stage 2 declined, particularly in English. The school tackled this issue promptly and effectively. School and local authority data show that in 2008 a much higher proportion of pupils attained the nationally expected Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 and a very high proportion of pupils attained Level 5 in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils have opportunities to work in a variety of different groupings. Tasks are interesting and exciting and pupils have good attitudes towards their work. In September 2008, all teachers moved into new year groups. Over the longer term this is a positive move which is already having a significant impact on further raising attainment in Years 5 and 6. However, in the short term, while teachers are becoming familiar with new age groups and expectations, there have been some small temporary difficulties. For example, a small proportion of teaching does not accurately meet the needs of pupils and in some classes some of the most able pupils are not challenged well enough. Marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work and, even when this guidance is provided, pupils do not have time to act on the advice given. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning in lessons and at other times in the school day.

The curriculum is outstanding. It has been adapted to meet the needs and interests of pupils and to ensure that they achieve well. There is a strong focus on developing creativity both through the formal curriculum and in after school clubs and activities. Resources for information and communication technology (ICT) are very good and pupils use laptops very effectively in all subjects.

Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. They are self-confident and well motivated and are happy to explain their ideas or answer questions. This, coupled with their good achievement, means that they are very well equipped for the next stage in their education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported because the school has very effective systems and procedures and works well in partnership with parents and external agencies. Pupils and staff genuinely accept and value the diversity of the school community and, as a result, all pupils are fully included in the life of the school.

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and he is well supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and by experienced and skilled middle managers. Staff are given very good opportunities to develop new skills and to take on new responsibilities. As a result, there is very effective leadership at all levels and staff are enthusiastic in their work and respond well to new challenges. The governing body are very well informed. The expertise of individual governors is used to good effect and there are strong links with leaders of subjects and

curriculum areas. School self-evaluation is rigorous and regular and this, together with effective leadership, is ensuring that the school builds upon existing success. Capacity for further improvement is good and the school provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory with some good features. Children achieve steadily in a happy and safe learning environment. The good contact between the school and previous providers ensures children are familiar with new surroundings and settle quickly. Parents strongly appreciate the daily contact they have with staff and many attend the popular Tuesday reading club. Plans cover all areas of learning and children choose where they wish to learn. However the range of activities both indoors and outside is sparse. Some staff are relatively new to the EYFS, but have already made improvements to promote children's independence. Activities led by adults have a clear learning outcome. Here, staff interact sensitively with children, encourage their learning and engage them in purposeful talk. Children make good progress during these activities. The desired outcome of activities that children choose for themselves is not always clear, so valuable learning opportunities are missed. The outdoor area gives good opportunities to develop physical skills and children thoroughly enjoy outdoor play. The school knows that the range of outdoor activities does not include all areas of learning and has further improvement plans in place. Adults observe children's development and keep careful records; however, they do not use the information rigorously enough to ensure that those of above average ability make the expected progress. The introduction of a structured programme in teaching letters and sounds has a positive effect on improving early reading skills. Children make steady progress in their personal development, early literacy and mathematical skills. By the time they move on to Year 1 children are close to the level expected. Leadership of the EYFS is satisfactory. The leader monitors teaching and learning, but does not analyse learning outcomes sufficiently to identify ways to enhance learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the work given to pupils, particularly more able pupils, provides a suitable level of challenge.
- Ensure that marking tells pupils how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality and range of activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school most can do less than is typically expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the EYFS but on entry to Year 1, some are not ready for the demands of more formal teaching and learning. Pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. For many years their attainment by the end of both key stages has been in line with national averages in all core subjects. A slight decline in Key Stage 2 in 2007 was tackled promptly and school data shows that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was well above average in 2008. This is due to the hard work of those pupils and their teacher, but it is also the result of a very effective initiative which is designed to boost pupil's reading ability, particularly their comprehension skills, and encourage them to enjoy books. The school's evaluations show that this is having a very positive impact on achievement throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very proud of the school and they have an accurate understanding of its many strengths. They appreciate all that is done for them and enjoy their education. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is generally good and pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have good relationships with staff and they are happy to share their ideas and opinions with others. They have a good understanding of the diversity of society and a genuine acceptance of the differences between people. Work in lessons gives older pupils in particular very good opportunities to discuss issues such as prejudice and bias and explore their own attitudes and values. Children care for each other very well. They talk very positively about the 'Friendship Stop' which helps pupils who may be feeling a little lonely and of the work of the 'peer mediators' who help to resolve disputes or difficulties. Pupils are aware that bullying can occur in life but they say that if it happens in school it is resolved quickly and to their satisfaction. Pupils are involved in the local community and with local churches and they have a good understanding of life in the wider world. There is a well established school council and all pupils have opportunities to contribute ideas and opinions. Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles and they speak very positively about the many additional clubs and activities which are available in school. Their good achievement, high self-esteem and curiosity about the world prepare pupils very well for their future lives and they look forward confidently to the next stage in their education. One boy said that going to comprehensive school 'would open up a whole new world'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Pupils make good progress during lessons because teachers have good subject knowledge and explain work clearly. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils have good opportunities to work on interesting tasks and discuss their ideas with a partner or with a wider group. Pupils are very well supported by teachers and very effective teaching assistants. A few pupils have difficulties managing their behaviour and focusing on learning but teachers manage these difficulties skilfully so that the learning of these pupils and the rest of the class is not disrupted. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that all pupils understand new ideas or concepts and remain focused on their task. Teachers provide very effective feedback to pupils during lessons but marking is more variable. The best marking tells pupils what they have achieved and what they must do to improve further. However, not all marking is as good as this and, even when marking is good, pupils are not given time to act on the advice given. Teachers have accepted the move to new year groups very positively and are delivering effective teaching because their classroom skills are good. However, they are still coming to terms with a new age group and curriculum so some small issues remain. In some classes, the work given to pupils does not always meet their needs and the work given to the most able pupils is not always sufficiently demanding. Because of shared expectations and effective working relationships the job sharing arrangements are very successful and benefit pupils. The school's systems to track the progress made by individual pupils have recently been updated and are now very effective. The school is reviewing the way in which it sets targets for pupils in order to ensure that teachers and pupils focus on the most important priorities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

In recent months the curriculum has been reviewed, and in some classes a 'creative curriculum' is being trialled. Subjects are linked in order to make learning more exciting and relevant. Senior leaders are monitoring the implementation of this work very carefully to ensure that all subjects are covered in sufficient depth. Early evaluations suggest that this new curriculum is very successful. Pupils look forward to lessons of this type and are developing very good skills which are helping them to learn effectively in all subjects. This work is promoting pupils' social, moral and personal development and is further enhancing their literacy skills. In recent months, most reading books have been replaced and classes have been provided with sets of novels which are helpfully linked to work covered in foundation subjects. A great deal of money has been spent on further improving resources for information and communication technology (ICT). In addition to the well equipped computer suite there is also a portable suite of laptops which are used very effectively to enhance learning in all subjects. Pupils benefit from a very rich curriculum that includes strong provision for art and music. Modern foreign languages have been introduced and school staff are supported by a part time foreign language assistant shared with other schools. There is a very good range of after school clubs and activities and regular visits to places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. All pupils are fully included in the life of the school and pupils who require additional help are supported very sensitively by staff and other pupils. Particular care is taken to ensure that transition arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are managed effectively when they join the school and when they leave. The school works very effectively with parents and other agencies, and all arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe are fully implemented. Pupils and parents talk very positively about the very good care and support provided by the school. Pupils are given good moral and social guidance and are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on others. Pupils enjoy school because they have good relationships with staff and feel valued and secure.

The before and after school care is good. Activities take place in a spacious, safe and well equipped room with good access to an outside area. The room is welcoming and staff have good relationships with the children in their care. Children have good opportunities to play alongside other children this extends their learning and promotes self-confidence. Systems for recording attendance and keeping children safe and secure are good and all policies and procedures are up-to-date. Adults are suitably qualified and the provision is very well led and managed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and he is well supported by a very effective deputy headteacher and skilled middle managers. Senior and middle leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and support each other well. Governors are experienced and hard working. They support the headteacher and staff very effectively, often giving up their time to work

voluntarily in school or by using their particular skills to strengthen aspects of management. Governors have appropriately high expectations of the school and its staff and are not afraid to challenge the leadership team in order to ensure that these expectations are fulfilled. Staff at all levels lead aspects of provision and this is having a very positive impact on the school's capacity to improve and its ability to cope with staffing changes. The school has a leadership development programme and all staff attend internal, local or national training events. The school works very well with all of its partners and particularly well with parents and families. School self-evaluation is regular and rigorous and the headteacher and staff have a shared focus on improvement. Plans made to improve the school are robust and help staff to understand their role in the improvement process. The governing body and the headteacher manage the school budget well. Despite some difficulties caused by declining pupil numbers, the school is very well resourced and surplus space is used very effectively to create well equipped specialist teaching rooms. Financial resources are used shrewdly to improve pupils' achievement and the outcomes of the schools work show that this money is well spent.

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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?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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	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

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

13 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Eppleton Primary School, Sunderland, DH5 9AJ

Thank you for being so welcoming when I inspected your school with Mrs Ulyatt and Miss Gill.

We enjoyed talking to you and we thought you were very polite and helpful. You will be pleased to know that we agree with all the very positive things that you said. Your school is a 'quality' school. You make good progress with your work because lessons are interesting and your teachers make sure that you work hard and do not give up or get distracted. You have lots of opportunities to share your ideas with others and we were very pleased to see that you like to answer questions and talk to adults. The staff give you very good support in lessons and care for you very well. You obviously value the work of the peer mediators and we were pleased to hear that they help you to deal with occasional incidents of bullying. We think that the 'friendship stop' is very helpful. It must be reassuring to know that if you are a little bit lonely you can find someone to play with. We could see that everyone in your school is included and that you are sensitive to the needs, culture or beliefs of others. We think that most of you behave very well.

Mr Henderson and the staff work very hard to improve the school and we could see that you appreciate all the new things that they provide. You have a lot of clubs and after school activities and we could tell that you enjoy going out on visits or welcoming visitors to the school. You reminded me that these visits are educational but I could tell that you enjoy them and everything else that the school provides very much.

There are a few things that we think the school could improve. In some classes teachers mark your books very well and tell you exactly how to improve but this does not happen in all classes. We also think that the work given to some children is a little too easy so we have asked the teachers to make sure that your work is challenging and makes you think. Children in the Early Years and Foundation Stage do not always progress as well as everyone else so we have asked the school to improve the activities they are given.

Enjoy the rest of the term and all your Christmas activities.

Best wishes

Christine E Graham

Her Majesty's Inspector