

Eckington Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112542
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325626
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Lemon

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Vickers
Headteacher	Mr J Stringer
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2007
School address	School Street Eckington Derbyshire S21 4FL
Telephone number	01246 432549
Fax number	01246 436442

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. Pupils start school in Year 3 with broadly average standards. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of special educational needs are all broadly average. Where pupils have a statement these relate either to moderate learning difficulties, behavioural difficulties or medical conditions. Very few pupils arrive or leave school other than at the usual time.

The school has gained a number of awards recently: the local authority's Anti-Bullying Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools status and an international school award in recognition of its work in developing the teaching of a modern foreign language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness is satisfactory. However as a result of much improvement since the previous inspection, its educational provision has significant good features. Achievement is satisfactory as, increasingly, the majority reach the expected level of attainment. However, too many of the more able pupils are not reaching consistently, the higher levels of which they are capable. While the school has a strong desire to drive standards higher, not all the means to do so are in place. Since its previous inspection, the school has made good progress in improving provision and equality of opportunity. The proportion of good teaching has increased because the quality of lessons has been a focus for school leaders and governors. This is helping to accelerate pupils' progress, as evidenced by their current work. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for secondary education.

There are many exceptional aspects to the headteacher's leadership. He has led significant improvements and as a consequence the school has a better reputation among parents and in the community. Parents' views are extremely positive and many have acknowledged the significant transformation they have witnessed in the past few years, which they associate with the headteacher's work. Governors have played an exceptional part in the school's improvement. They are very closely involved in every aspect of its work and development. They bring considerable expertise and commitment to support the headteacher and staff and to determine direction and priorities. The school's capacity for ongoing improvement is good.

Subject coordination has strengthened since the previous inspection and now it is having a good impact on curriculum development and on the monitoring of teaching and learning. A considerable amount of effort is invested, by the deputy headteacher in particular, in tracking pupils' progress using data from test results and the school's own substantial assessment procedures. Coordinators are increasingly able to use data analysis to evaluate their subjects. However, the presentation of the data does not show clearly the progress of all individual pupils. Also some targets are not challenging enough and so fewer pupils achieve the higher levels. Therefore, the good progress the school aspires to is not being achieved.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are lively and in most respects well-planned, pupils enjoy their work and make considerable efforts with it. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils in lessons although they play a limited role in helping teachers assess pupils' progress. Overall, across the school, the care and support for pupils is good. The curriculum, which has been planned effectively with pupils' needs and interests in mind, makes a positive difference to their attitudes and engagement. Their personal development is good and within this, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, healthy lifestyle, enjoyment and behaviour are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement by ensuring progress tracking data enables teachers to understand more clearly each pupil's progress and to set them appropriate targets.
- Use teaching assistants to assess pupils' progress in lessons.
- Raise the achievement of more able pupils in English, mathematics and science by setting them more challenging targets.

A small proportion of 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, which is indicated by national test results in 2007 and 2008. The proportion of pupils reaching the standards expected for their age has been increasing since 2006. The indications from the school's current data on Year 6 pupils' performances in English, mathematics and science and from pupils' work this year show the improvement in standards continues. Girls performed less well than girls nationally in 2008 although this has not been a feature in previous years. Current work indicates girls' standards are at the expected level. The trend of improvement in the standards of the more able pupils is not so well established; in 2007 and 2008 their results were more variable than other pupils. Results show satisfactory achievement in English but underachievement in mathematics. Pupils' achievement in science improved in 2008 and was satisfactory. The school's most recent assessments indicate that more able pupils' standards remain variable but are satisfactory in English and improved in mathematics.

Achievement is satisfactory as pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress. Improvements in teaching are having a positive impact on learning. Pupils are keen to achieve and work hard to meet their targets. Pupils who find learning more difficult make satisfactory progress as they are given support and their needs are understood.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Very positive attitudes towards school are reflected in pupils' enthusiasm for their work. They enjoy school thoroughly and their attendance is good. The school's extremely positive ethos and the adults' consistently good example encourage good personal development. Pupils are happy and stay safe. Behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent and there are no indications that bullying is a concern for parents or pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding and this is enhanced by many out-of-school activities including visits to different places of worship and regular valuable reflection in assemblies, promoting community cohesion. Pupils relate very well to staff and with each other. Pupils' adherence to a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They have a very good understanding of keeping fit and healthy and choose the most healthy food to eat. Most pupils enthusiastically join in the wide range of playtime activities and games. Pupils are confident and play a full part in the life of the school and contribute well. The school council has a high profile and meets regularly with the headteacher. They are convinced their views are respected by staff. Pupils' good personal development and satisfactory achievement ensures they all have a sound preparation for secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching continues to benefit from the rigorous monitoring of lessons, professional development and the priority given to it in teachers' performance management. A positive

impact on learning is clearly discernible in pupils' good attitudes and efforts. The strengths of teaching are not yet as obvious in significantly improved results, although standards are rising. There are good features of teaching in all lessons helping pupils to learn and make progress. Some elements of teaching are outstanding at times. Teaching is often planned well, with thought given to matching work to each pupil's abilities, although this is not always as challenging as it could be. Each lesson has a clear learning objective and this is shared effectively with pupils, who often evaluate their success in achieving the objective. Teaching is lively, paced briskly and makes learning enjoyable. Teaching assistants are used well in lessons to give support to individuals and small groups of pupils, particularly those with learning or behavioural difficulties. Their role is not developed sufficiently in order to assess pupils' progress systematically in lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum has undergone a transformation and has improved so provision is now good. The focus of developments has been on making all pupils' work and activities enjoyable and interesting, which has been successful. Improvements in provision for literacy have helped to raise standards in English. Work is well underway to bring mathematics up-to-date with recent developments nationally, and more practical science work is being planned. Pupils' activities are enriched with a wide range of out-of-school activities, such as visits to local museums, the theatre, activity centres and places of interest, all contributing to pupils' understanding of community cohesion. The school places great emphasis on the promotion of all aspects of physical education. Specialist tutors and coaches in the arts, music, sports and athletics strengthen provision. Curriculum planning enables pupils to make links between subjects and to apply their range of knowledge and skills in all areas of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care is high for every pupil. The arrangements are robust for keeping pupils safe and providing them with pastoral support. The headteacher plays a leading role in this respect and leads the way for staff in looking after pupils. The staff are alert, picking up and dealing quickly with any worries pupils have. Pupils are confident about approaching staff, knowing that they will be listened to. The school works effectively with other agencies to ensure vulnerable pupils and those who find learning more difficult or have medical conditions are well supported. The system for tracking pupil progress ensures there is help for pupils who have difficulty with reading, writing or mathematics; likewise for pupils with behaviour difficulties. The majority of pupils know their targets and while marking is not consistently informative across the school, most pupils are being shown effectively how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has provided exceptional leadership in moving the school forward and improving educational provision in many respects. His leadership, supported by the outstanding contribution of governors, has brought many benefits. The staff are settled, their morale is high and everyone is focused on improvement and raising standards. Developments in teaching

and the curriculum make the school enjoyable and exciting for pupils, which is evident in better opportunities for all of them and their much improved personal development. Parents have seen the positive transformations; they are confident and enthusiastic about the school's future. The leadership of others, subject coordinators and the inclusion manager in particular, is good, as it benefits from clear direction, commitment and systematic management. All leaders, including governors, play a vital role in checking for strengths and weaknesses. The school has carried out an evaluation of its impact on community cohesion. Self-evaluation is accurate; the headteacher and governors have a realistic view of the school's effectiveness, especially the need to streamline the tracking of pupils' progress and increase the challenge of targets in order to raise standards further.

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	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	3

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	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2
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?	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

24 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eckington Junior School, Eckington, S21 4FL

Many thanks for contributing to the inspection of your school. You made us feel very welcome and you were all very helpful towards us. This reflects extremely well on you and your school. Many thanks also to the group of pupils who met with an inspector to share their views of the school.

We judged the education you get in your school to be satisfactory. We have said this because at the moment you are making satisfactory progress. We think you could make more progress and achieve higher standards but your targets would need to be more challenging. Mr Stringer agrees with this; he and the staff will be working to improve your targets and match these more closely to your abilities.

Your school has benefited from a lot of improvement since it was last inspected. Mr Stringer and all of the staff have worked really hard to get to where you are today. We were pleased to hear your positive views of school. Teaching has improved; from what we saw lessons are enjoyable and we were impressed by the hard work you do in every lesson. All of the staff helping teachers in lessons do a good job of supporting your learning. We have asked Mr Stringer to make it possible for them to play a bigger part in assessing your progress and add this to your teacher's assessment.

All of the work and activities on offer, including those after school, have been made interesting and exciting. This is getting the best from you. We saw this in your very good attitudes and excellent behaviour. Your understanding of how to stay healthy is outstanding.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Alan Lemon

Lead inspector