

# Ebchester Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114214
<b>Local Authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	325965
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graeme Clarke

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	68
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Geoff Gibson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Dorothy Parry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Shaw Lane Ebchester Consett County Durham DH8 0QB

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	325965

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This much smaller than average size primary school serves families from Ebchester village and the Derwent Valley to the north of Consett. It is a locality where living standards are broadly average. An average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. All pupils are from White British families. A well above average proportion of pupils has a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a few have a statement of special educational need. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in the Reception Year. The school has the Investors in Children award, the Healthy School Award and Activemark for sport.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Ebchester is a good and improving school where some important aspects of its work are now outstanding. The school's excellent care and support for pupils lie at the heart of the outstandingly inclusive education it imparts. Such high quality provision stems from the exemplary direction and support which the headteacher, very ably assisted by her leadership team, gives to everyone. All the staff very successfully promote the school's Christian values and foster the philosophy that every child does matter. A thoroughly planned, rich curriculum helps pupils to achieve well and develop outstanding personal qualities, such as respect for others, confidence and maturity. Fruitful partnerships with parents, the church, heritage and outdoor centres greatly enhance pupils' development. A great majority of parents hold the school in the highest regard. One parent's comments sum up their confidence: 'A lovely, caring school. The staff are very approachable and my children are very happy there.'

In this small school the backgrounds and starting points of each year group often vary considerably. The starting points of pupils in the current Year 6 were below average. Since then they have achieved well to reach average standards in English and mathematics. In 2008, higher attaining pupils did better than expected. Initiatives to develop writing and mathematics have led pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 6, to make clearly good progress but are not yet fully embedded in other year groups. Of particular note is that, although a majority of pupils in Year 6 have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, carefully tailored teaching and excellent support ensure they make good progress. Many have already reached standards beyond the challenging level expected of them.

The school provides very high levels of pastoral care and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils' development and their contribution to community cohesion are also outstanding because they have many opportunities to extend their understanding of British and global cultural diversity. Pupils are very aware of the importance of diet and exercise to a healthy lifestyle. All pupils, including those with disabilities, take part enthusiastically in physical activities. Pupils behave impeccably and act safely and considerately. They work industriously and thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils willingly contribute to their school and local community in numerous ways and to many charitable activities. They are very well prepared for their future.

The leadership team, working with governors, has thoroughly addressed the issues for attention raised at the last inspection. Successful initiatives have developed the curriculum and extended the governors' role in evaluation, and are raising standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Diligently managed arrangements to use information about pupils' progress and very successful support for inexperienced teachers are improving learning. The school provides good value for money. Governors and senior leaders strive for excellence and are strongly committed to raising standards. There is a very strong team spirit to continue to develop the school and provide a good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Improvements to staffing and facilities have successfully led children to achieve well in the Reception Year. A well established system of visits eases transition into the Reception class and the home-school activity cards give parents useful ideas to support their children's learning.

They are delighted at how quickly their children settle into school. Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are lower than usual for their age, especially in language development. Over the past two years they have made good progress and by the end of Reception many reach at least average standards in all areas of learning. They reach high standards in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. This year many have made exceptionally good progress in their reading development as a result of the new 'letters and sounds' initiative. Very good standards of personal, social and emotional development prevail. Adults emphasise courtesy and consideration throughout the day. Well established routines result in children developing confidence to choose sensibly, working very well together or on their own and conducting themselves impeccably. Children participate fully in activities where an appropriate balance is struck between independent and adult-supported activities. Importantly, staff make the most of opportunities that arise to promote learning. Children make good use of the exciting indoor and outdoor facilities which support all areas of learning. Innovative use of nearby woodland makes a major contribution to enhancing their investigative and social skills. Rigorous use of assessments and expert teaching ensure children make good progress. Children's good achievement is the result of clear and effective leadership which ensures the highest standards of care and support and which provides an excellent basis for further development.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Consolidate the benefits of initiatives to raise standards and improve progress further in reading, writing and especially mathematics throughout Years 1 to 6.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils in Year 2 both last year and this began Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities that were below average. They made good progress to reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2008. This year, pupils have made similarly good progress and standards are typical for their age. A recent initiative to promote writing has led pupils to achieve higher than expected results.

English and mathematics standards in Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years. In 2008 more able pupils made better progress than predicted. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attained more highly than their counterparts nationally. Overall standards were broadly average; pupils exceeded challenging targets in English and met them in mathematics.

The picture is different this year where a very high proportion of pupils, more than two thirds, have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They began Key Stage 2 with below average standards and have made clearly good and for some excellent progress, especially in reading and writing, as a result of a recent initiative and carefully tailored teaching. Over the whole Year 6 group, standards are broadly typical for their age now, representing good achievement. Boys and girls have made equally good progress.

### **Personal development and well-being**

#### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding personal development and well-being stem from the enormous benefit pupils derive from a very wide range of opportunities in lessons, assemblies and visits to the Church and heritage centres and extensive use of the local environment. Collectively these experiences

lead to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils speak informatively about the importance of healthy eating. All take part enthusiastically and very skilfully in physical activities and voluntary sports after school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy lessons and the sense of accomplishment that comes from their endeavour. They happily celebrate the success of others. They comment very positively on the friendships they make and like the school just the way it is. Pupils say they feel safe and that antisocial behaviour is rare and they know how to deal with it. The school very successfully develops pupils' personal responsibility, which is reflected by their flawless behaviour in lessons, their politeness and consideration for others. Pupils make a vital contribution to community cohesion. They are caring in looking after their schoolmates; for example, older ones support younger pupils in the playground. The school council is proud that their suggestions have improved facilities. Pupils participate in many activities within the local community and willingly become involved in charitable causes. Through art, music, geography and religious education pupils extend their knowledge of the diversity of life in Britain and widen their global perspectives. Pupils' excellent social skills, extensive experience of enterprise, awareness of secondary education and competent basic skills prepare them exceptionally well for their future. Most pupils attend very well but the occasional absence of a very small minority of pupils impacts disproportionately on overall figures in such a small school. Nevertheless, attendance is above average overall.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching leads pupils to make good progress in lessons and encourages good achievement. Teachers provide well suited activities which strongly motivate pupils. They successively extend pupils' knowledge and understanding by taxing them, especially the most able, through well designed activities. In the best lessons, skilful use of interactive whiteboards and thought provoking questions encourage pupils to participate fully in lessons and give their views and detailed explanations. Importantly, teachers reinforce key points at suitable points in the lesson and consolidate pupils' learning thoroughly well. However, on occasions, questioning is unclear and lacks challenge, or class discussion goes on for too long to the point when pupils' attention wanders. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Central to the school's ethos of care and consideration for all is the totally inclusive way teachers and assistants work really well together so that all pupils, whatever their abilities, learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are helped to take full part in discussion and practical activities along with their classmates.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

All pupils have full access to an outstanding, well balanced curriculum. Carefully planned activities are creatively arranged in a way that develops their skills and knowledge very successfully. Pupils have an exceedingly rich range of opportunities to take part in physical and culturally related activities, out-of-school events, and after-school clubs. Pupils' art and design, work from participation in studies of other countries and outcomes of social and emotional learning are all displayed to excellent effect and reflect outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Use of local resources, particularly those associated with the grounds and surrounding countryside, makes the curriculum exciting and relevant to all. Pupils' knowledge of their local community and its heritage is successfully developed through links

with nearby schools and through local studies and visits. Developing international links and work in religious education and the arts widen pupils' perspectives of life in and outside Britain. Excellent partnerships with the Church, local businesses and community associations further enrich pupils' skills, awareness and understanding and make a vital contribution to their lives.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school has a very tangible culture of care for individuals and it offers outstanding pastoral support. Staff know all pupils very well and in turn pupils justifiably say they feel secure and know who to turn to for help. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants and together they make meticulous use of information about pupils' attainment to provide very effective support and help those with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good or outstanding progress. Parents are greatly appreciative of the inclusive way their children are able to take part in all activities. Teachers set challenging targets, although at times they are not sufficiently precise, but pupils do feel satisfied that they know what is expected of them. Methodical arrangements for marking, often jointly with pupils, help them recognise their success and congratulate them on their accomplishments. Some marking is exemplary, more so in English than mathematics, and gives pupils clear pointers and guidance about how they can improve their work. Effective arrangements in partnership with the local authority's welfare service successfully tackle issues of punctuality and attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding leadership and management have established the caring ethos, very positive climate for learning and encouragement of excellent personal development evident throughout the school. Well established procedures ensure that the school runs very smoothly day by day. Governance is excellent. Governors' close involvement with the school means they have a very clear view which is extended by informative reports from senior staff and first-hand participation in monitoring its work rigorously. Together with senior leaders, governors have a very perceptive picture of the school's strengths, plan improvements clearly and implement them with great success. They meet all their responsibilities, including current government requirements to safeguard the welfare of pupils and successfully prevent discrimination. A particularly strong feature of the governors and senior leaders' work is their outstanding analysis made to promote community cohesion. Partnerships strongly enhance the community the school serves and exceptionally well planned activities widen pupils' perspectives of the diversity of culture in Britain and world-wide.



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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?	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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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?	1
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**

26 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ebchester Church of England Primary School, Durham,

DH8 0QB

I really enjoyed my recent visit to inspect your school. Thank you for helping me when I came into your classrooms and assembly to see you at work. You were very polite and helpful and I did enjoy talking with those of you whom I met. I saw how much you enjoy taking part in lessons and activities, how you value the help you get and the friendships you make. I was enormously impressed at the way you help one another so that everyone, even if they have difficulties, can answer questions, play music and take a full part in physical education. You are very well behaved and polite to others in lessons and outside. I was pleased to see how you contribute to life in school, such as through your school council and how you help others who are less fortunate than you. I know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you.

Your school is good. In some respects it is outstanding. All the adults in the school look after you exceptionally well and that is why you feel safe and happy. Your school is warm and welcoming and very well organised. I was very impressed with all your work on display. When your teachers mark your books they always tell you how pleased they are with the work you are doing or suggest clear ways to help you improve. You all make good progress in your work and, by the time you are in Year 6, your standards in English, mathematics and science are similar to those of most pupils in other schools. Those of you in Years 2 and 6 are making especially good progress in reading and writing as a result of the writing project.

I have asked your teachers to extend these arrangements to help all of you in all year groups to do as well as you can in English and in mathematics.

You have very many opportunities at Ebchester Primary School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. Some of you will soon be leaving to join a secondary school. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours faithfully

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector