

Esh CofE (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114251
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	325975
Inspection date	26 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Rodger

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	84
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 Steven Bradley
Headteacher	Mr Mike Urwin
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Front Street Esh Village Durham County Durham DH7 9QR
Telephone number	0191 3731324
Fax number	0191 373 1324

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of high standards on the overall quality of pupils' work
- the impact of the leadership and strong teamwork on the ethos and success of the school
- the effectiveness of arrangements to implement the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, the chair of governors, senior leadership team, including the deputy headteacher, EYFS leader and a group of pupils on the school council. In addition, parts of lessons were observed, and school documents, samples of pupils' work and the parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a below average sized school situated in a small village close to Durham city. Pupils attending the school come from the local community. The area is mixed socially and economically. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for a free school meal. There is a below average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recent awards include Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School Award, Activemark and Silver Artsmark. The school shares a sports hall and a multi-purpose outdoor area with a neighbouring school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Everyone smiles here' is more than a catchy slogan in Esh Church of England Primary School. Pupils feel happy, secure and supported and, as a result, give of their best. Parental views such as, 'A school is not just about lessons, it is about life ... it is outstanding on both counts', sum up the judgement of the inspection. This is an outstanding school in which pupils achieve exceptionally well by the time they reach Year 2 and Year 6. Exceptionally high standards are reached in English, mathematics and science. The provisional results in the most recent national tests support this assessment. Pupils are well prepared for the national tests and all achieve significantly above average results each year. The school met its challenging targets this year. The quality of teaching is excellent because of the high priority given to making learning enjoyable and the exemplary match of work to meet the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. The leadership of the headteacher is a major strength because of excellent relationships and partnerships with parents and the involvement with the local community. Parents praise the safe, nurturing environment in which their children thrive.

Standards are consistently significantly above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils make excellent progress based on their broadly average starting points when they enter the EYFS. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve particularly well because of the high quality support they receive and the close attention to their progress as soon as they start school. More able pupils make impressive gains in their learning because they are encouraged to work with their older peers. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Healthy lifestyles are fostered and well reflected in the Healthy School Award and changes to the school meals. Pupils care for each other and value the buddy system at playtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Links with other countries, visits and visitors ensure pupils develop a thorough understanding of cultural and social diversity. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They enjoy school hugely, which is reflected in their excellent attendance levels which are much improved over the past three years. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils conduct themselves maturely from a young age. They thrive when given responsibilities.

The quality of teaching is excellent. Pupils' work is marked in great detail with clear targets to help them improve their work. This, they said, 'boosts their confidence'. Confidence shines through the pupils as they describe the approachability and friendliness of the staff. They enjoy learning because teachers, 'make it fun and we learn mathematics with great games'. The pace in lessons is brisk and excellent attention to the range of ages in each class ensures work is matched extremely well to their needs. In the best lessons, what pupils are learning is clearly displayed and shared with the pupils to help their understanding. The excellent curriculum is broad and contributes very well to developing healthy lifestyles because of the additional accommodation available in the sports hall and multi-purpose areas. 'Huff and Puff' exercises enable the pupils to keep fit and a wide range of sports activities are held after school. Pupils' care, guidance and support are exemplary. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. A robust assessment system to track the progress of each child throughout school is used very effectively to set challenging targets.

Leadership and management are outstanding; that of the headteacher is particularly strong because of the steps taken to meet and greet parents at the start and end of the day. This informal and nonetheless effective means of communicating with parents means that a more formal consultation with parents to seek their views does not take place. Because of this, some parents do not feel their views are gathered with sufficient regularity. Teamwork and sharing

ideas are strong features of the school's practice. Self-evaluation is a succinct and a very accurate reflection of the school's work. The school is pivotal in the local community because of the strengths in the links with communities, whether it be a nearby school or one in another country. Community groups use the school premises extensively and members of the community are regular visitors into school for performances and to the local church for the celebration of religious festivals. Close links with a special school are helping Year 6 pupils to forge friendships with other communities. Governors are astute and use their expertise to excellent effect to support the school. For example, a parent is leading the development of the school council. Target setting is challenging. Excellent steps taken last year to improve mathematical standards for more able pupils are making a first-rate impact. Level 5 targets were exceeded as a result. The school has an excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The provision for the EYFS is exemplary. Children exceed the age-related expectations in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Reception class. Children work alongside Year 1 pupils. They are sometimes together but more often they work as a separate group with access to a well-resourced outdoor area. A detailed assessment system and most effective home/school notebook ensure that the children are supported very well and there is an exemplary relationship with parents. Regular observations of children identify the next steps in their learning. The needs of individual pupils are met very effectively as a result of the EYFS leader's thorough analysis of children's starting points provided by feeder nurseries. Children's learning is outstanding and they quickly develop excellent levels of confidence and understanding of the early learning goals in all areas of learning. Their competence in the use of laptops develops particularly well as a result of the daily expectation to log when they have arrived in the classroom. Partnership with parents is excellent and children quickly settle into the routines of school. Teaching is outstanding. The teacher and teaching assistant work particularly well together to provide enjoyable learning activities for the children. Role-play is very effective because it encourages the children to talk, for example, as they eagerly peered out to find the dinosaur. Personal, social and emotional development is fostered exceptionally well. Leadership is excellent because of the example of vibrant and enthusiastic relationships and very secure understanding of the needs of young children. Welfare arrangements ensure pupils are safe and well cared for in line with the high expectations of the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce a more formal system to gather the views of all parents.

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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?	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	1
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	1
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?	1
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

29 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Esh CofE (Aided) Primary School, Durham, DH7 9QR

Thank you all for making my day in your school so enjoyable. It was a pleasure to talk to members of the school council and to see all the exciting work you do. It would have been wonderful to stay for longer than one day. Your school is outstanding for the following reasons.

- You all really enjoy school and many of you are rarely absent because of the fun you have.
- Excellent teaching ensures learning is fun for you and so you learn quickly and enthusiastically.
- You all work very hard. This shows very well in the excellent results you achieve in the national tests each year in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Behaviour is outstanding and you take care of each other well and feel very safe and well cared for in school.
- All the people who help you in school are doing a great job too. They are working hard to make sure you have many resources and plenty of space to play games and keep fit.
- You said your school meals are very healthy now and some of you liked having yoghurt.
- Your teachers are working hard in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make sure you have plenty of ways to learn inside and outside.

There is one thing your school has been asked to do to make things even better and that is to make sure that all parents have the chance to give their views about school developments.

Thank you again and continue to enjoy your time at Esh school.

Best wishes

Rosemary Rodger

Lead inspector