

Eckington CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116806
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326452
Inspection date	17 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Martin Cole

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–10
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	Susan Snaith
Headteacher	Gail Whiting
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Lane Eckington Persnore WR10 3AU
Telephone number	01386 750666
Fax number	01386 750666

Age group	4–10
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- older pupils' progress, especially in mathematics and science
- pupils' personal development and well-being
- the guidance pupils receive on their work.

Evidence was gathered from the school's assessment information, planning, monitoring and other documents, observation of lessons, discussions with staff and pupils, and from parents' written comments. There was no detailed investigation of other aspects of the school's work but 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 this report.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils of this small rural school are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies over time but is generally similar to that found in most primary schools. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class. At the time of the inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher, following the resignation of the previous post holder. The acting headteacher has recently been appointed to the substantive role of headteacher with effect from the beginning of the summer term 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils' academic achievement is good and standards are high. Pupils also develop well in personal qualities. Effective leadership and management are taking the school forward energetically.

From their earliest days in the Reception class, the children come to enjoy school life and learning. Throughout the school, pupils show interest and enthusiasm both in lessons and in the many other activities and opportunities provided for them. They feel safe and happy at school, thanks to what one parent called 'the lovely community atmosphere'. Other parents described the environment provided by the school as 'happy', 'secure', 'interesting' and 'challenging'. There are rigorous formal procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. These are supported by caring and cooperative relationships between adults and children and amongst children themselves. Good partnership also extends beyond the school through very strong links with parents and the local community. The school and the local community enrich each other through shared interests and activities; for example, parents and members of the community join in the school's annual music and poetry festivals and May Day celebrations.

Surrounded by caring relationships and armed with positive attitudes, pupils are well placed to take advantage of the good teaching and the good curriculum the school provides. As a result, pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress, regardless of gender or background. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 5, pupils' standards are well above the level expected nationally for their age.

The teaching is engaging, challenging and supportive and pupils learn willingly and try hard. Pupils behave well in lessons, concentrating hard on their work. The curriculum is imaginatively designed to inspire pupils' interest and make learning enjoyable. Well-planned lessons are supplemented by many special events, educational visits and visitors. A good range of after-school activities further extends opportunities for learning and enjoyment. The work and support teachers provide matches most pupils' abilities and needs well. However, the range of abilities and needs is very wide and the assessment of pupils' progress is not always successful in pinpointing the challenges and support that each individual needs to maximise progress. The progress of a small number of more able pupils, while at least satisfactory, is sometimes restricted when tasks given to them are insufficiently challenging. Teachers give good guidance to pupils. Marking of pupils' work gives them encouragement, sets fresh challenges and shows clearly how they can improve.

The curriculum gives pupils good guidance on personal and social matters so that they become thoughtful and responsible contributors to both school and the wider community. They are keen to express their ideas about improving the school and sometimes present their ideas on matters such as travel and recycling to representatives of the local community. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to be healthy and many try to put this into practice through healthy eating and taking exercise. The school's closeness to the local community helps pupils to develop a good understanding of their cultural heritage. In contrast, their appreciation of the cultural diversity of the wider society and world, while satisfactory, is less well developed. However, the inclusion of French in the curriculum, emerging links with an inner-city Birmingham school and with a community in Uganda are beginning to give pupils a wider understanding. Pupils' good achievement in basic skills, their confidence and their responsible attitudes are helping them to prepare well for the demands of adult and working life. This aspect of their

education also includes opportunities for older pupils to practise basic business skills through the activities of the 'Enterprise club'.

The school's many good qualities reflect the strong and determined leadership and management of the school. Effective leadership and close staff teamwork have helped the school prosper despite many staff changes at all levels over the last two years. The school's strengths and high standards have been maintained and some good improvements have been made, especially in pupils' standards of writing and in the quality of teachers' marking. It is clear from the good record of improvement that the capacity for further improvement in the school is good. The school's attempts to respond to the national expectation that schools should do more to promote community cohesion at national and international levels have been interrupted by the staffing disruptions, with some innovations not fully implemented and others still at the planning stage. Leadership of curriculum subjects has also been affected by staff changes and some staff are inexperienced in their roles. The headteacher and senior colleagues are aware of this, as they are also of other ways in which the school can improve. The school has a good understanding of its own performance and a clear sense of direction for the future. Governors contribute well to checks on the school and planning for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class soon become happy, confident and enthusiastic, thanks to the encouraging and caring atmosphere staff create. Children's enjoyment is clearly evident in their many smiles. The well-managed provision includes good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. The children make good progress and generally complete the Early Years Foundation Stage with above average attainment in all areas of learning. Staff know the children well as individuals. They assess their progress carefully and plan accordingly the next steps in children's learning, although these are not systematically recorded. Child-chosen and play activities are carefully blended with structured and intensive adult-led learning. All activities have clearly defined learning objectives so that they are both instructive and fun. They make good use of the attractive, well-resourced accommodation, both internal and external. There are beneficially flexible arrangements for children's transition to Year 1 according to their individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more rigorous checks on individual pupils' progress and use them to ensure that work for more able pupils is consistently challenging.
- Provide support and training to help staff develop their roles in subject leadership.
- Increase support for pupils to understand and value the diversity of the wider community; national and international.

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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?	2
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?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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	2
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	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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eckington CE First School, Pershore, WR10 3LU

The two inspectors who visited your school recently would like to thank all of you for your very friendly welcome. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you.

It was good to find that you enjoy school a lot and that you get on well with each other and with the adults. You clearly feel very safe and happy at school. You have a very sensible attitude to school and to your work, and you behave well. All of this is helping you to make good progress in your work. Most of you achieve a very good standard of work for your age.

Some of you told us how much help the teachers and the other adults give you. We could see this for ourselves. The adults look after you very well. They give you plenty of help and encouragement. The teachers give you the right kind of lessons and provide suitable work for you to do. You enjoy the many interesting visits, events and activities after lessons. We have said that yours is a good school. The adults in charge of the school are doing a fine job by seeing that you receive a good education. However, we think there are three ways the school could be even better.

- We believe a few of you could do harder work. We have asked the teachers to check your progress more carefully to see which of you should be given harder work.
- We think some of the teachers need more help to take charge of some of the subjects.
- We would like the teachers to help you understand more about people and their lives in different parts of the country and the world.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

M H Cole

Lead inspector