

Ellison Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124188
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328073
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan E Lowry

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)	358
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	R Machin
Headteacher	Angela Caton
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ellison Street Wolstanton Newcastle ST5 0BL
Telephone number	01782 297680
Fax number	01782 297680

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a larger-than-average primary school. It has experienced the impact of falling rolls although numbers are now stabilising. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school holds the Healthy School award, Activemark and is an Investor in People institution. The privately managed Five Star Care Club operates on the school ground, but was not inspected during this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ellison Primary is a satisfactory school. It has some good features including provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development and well-being. Most parents are positive about the school and they appreciate the ethos of care and support which exists in school. The school's environment is a lively and colourful one, where there is good use of display to celebrate pupils' achievement. There is a strong sense of pastoral care enabling pupils to feel safe and enjoy school and this leads to their good personal development. They are developing a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles. The pupils make a good contribution to their community, assuming a variety of additional responsibilities within school. Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills below the expected levels and make good progress to attain average standards on entry to Year 1. Overall, pupils make satisfactory, although uneven progress throughout the rest of the school. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. The school has targeted writing throughout the school and this is having a positive impact on the standards in this aspect, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are some examples of good and better teaching. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented strategies to ensure consistency in teaching and this has had some success, although there are still some inconsistencies. Teachers' relationships with pupils are a strong feature and this is reflected in the good behaviour seen throughout the school and the respect shown to adults by pupils. The good curriculum is supporting pupils' learning effectively. All pupils are engaged in their learning and they are offered good enrichment activities and themed weeks which really inspire pupils. A recent modern foreign languages week embraced community themes as well as developing the pupils' language capability. The modern foreign language curriculum and its delivery are outstanding. The school also has strengths in music and physical education (PE).

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. The pastoral care and support which pupils receive is good. However, academic guidance is less strong. Whilst all teachers mark work frequently, there are inconsistencies in practice. Pupils are provided with individual targets but they are not used sufficiently well to drive learning forward.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher is well supported by a new leadership team. The team has many skills: for instance, the curriculum strengths demonstrated by core subject leaders and management strengths of middle leaders, and all leaders show a clear, shared vision for improvement. They have worked well together to improve writing in school. However they need more time to have sustained impact on whole-school improvement. The team is not yet using assessment data sufficiently effectively to challenge the work of the school or the progress made by pupils. They have not yet demonstrated effective change through rigorous monitoring and evaluating of the work of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they enter Year 1, they have attained at least average standards. The classrooms are exciting places to learn. The children show themselves to be independent learners, able to embark upon any number of tasks without adult direction. There is a good range of activities to choose from

and children also use the interactive whiteboard independently to support them in their learning. They clearly enjoy their learning and their relationship with the adults is good and this leads to good personal development of the pupils. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and the leader has a clear understanding of what is needed to help children achieve. They are using the information that they gather about children's learning to ensure that the activities are tailored to their needs. Behaviour throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with staff showing appropriate intervention to ensure that play is safe and happy. Outdoor activities are well planned but the location of the outdoor area makes free flow of activities more difficult and this is an area under consideration by the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen assessment procedures and make rigorous use of the resulting information to accelerate the progress of all pupils.
- Ensure leaders and managers clearly focus their monitoring and evaluation on raising standards and expectations for pupils' learning.
- Build on monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning so that there is a greater consistency in teaching practice across the school.

A small proportion of the 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 in Key Stage 1 have been consistently average over the last three years. However, following a steep decline in standards in 2008, the school responded with a focus on writing skills and this has had an impact on standards in Key Stage 1, so that pupils show that they are making good progress and are on course to attain average standards at the end of Year 2. There has been a steady improvement in standards in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection, so that by the end of Year 6 they attain average standards, and make satisfactory progress. There are particularly high standards in science and the improvement in this area reflects the impact of specialised teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The pupils trust the adults who work with them and are confident that any behaviour difficulties that arise will be dealt with appropriately, and consequently, children feel safe. Children say that they enjoy their school life although attendance is only satisfactory. When asked, they talk about enjoying their involvement in fund raising for various charities, and also the wide range of subjects that they study. The importance of physical exercise is communicated well to the children through their PE sessions and pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of the school are all good. The children make a good contribution to the community, with Year 6 pupils assuming responsibilities around the school and the school council who are very enthusiastic about their plans for a school greenhouse. Pupils are adequately prepared for their next stage of learning. The school does well to promote the understanding of workplace skills through the eldest children's involvement in enterprise projects, such as running the tuck shop.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, although good and outstanding practice is also seen. Inconsistencies in teaching and learning are reflected in pupils' progress in some year groups. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive and support learners, particularly those who find learning or concentrating more difficult. The school is implementing a number of agreed practices to help tackle any inconsistencies. For instance, learning outcomes for each lesson are now shared with pupils, and this gives pupils a focus for their learning and they know what is expected of them. However, the use of curriculum targets and the new marking policy have been used less consistently well to focus the individual child on the next steps for learning. The school has improved the use of interactive whiteboards within the teaching and this is having a positive impact on teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and satisfies all statutory requirements. The curriculum is well matched to the pupils' needs and the school achieves a good level of enrichment. Children are excited by what they encounter, particularly in subjects other than literacy and numeracy. The school is working effectively to link literacy through other subjects and to develop a more creative curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by some outstanding modern foreign language teaching, as well as a high standard of music and PE tuition. Themed weeks do a great deal to enliven the curriculum and good use is made of visitors during these occasions to bring subjects alive. The children talk about these weeks with great enthusiasm. Residential trips also give pupils a chance to try their learning out in different environments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All safeguarding checks are in place. The school's procedures to identify and support vulnerable pupils are particularly good and are secure and rigorous. Pastoral care in school is good and children feel secure in their relationships with adults. The school does well to ensure that outside agencies are involved as early as possible to support pupils' development and learning. Academic guidance as yet, is satisfactory. The school has chosen to target particular areas as a whole school, such as the use of curricular targets. However, these new ways of working have not yet shown a consistent improvement in progress throughout the school because teaching and learning are not consistent. Tracking of pupil progress is undertaken, although it is not used with sufficient rigour to ensure continued progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The recently formed leadership team works well together and shares a common vision for improving the standards and progress achieved throughout the school. Governors support the school through their visits and their involvement is developing. Community cohesion is good and the school supports the local community by hosting speech and language, parent and

pre-school groups on the school site. The school also uses the culture of its children who come from other countries as a learning tool, to develop tolerance and understanding. The school has developed methods for gathering assessment data on pupils' progress. However, the leadership team is not, as yet, using the assessment data available to them to place high enough expectations on pupil progress. In addition, these data are not used sufficiently well to inform the team's monitoring and evaluating of the work of the school and as a consequence, the school's self-evaluation is satisfactory.

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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	3

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?	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	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	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	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?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ellison Primary School, Wolstanton, ST5 0BL

My colleagues and I would like to thank you all for talking to us when we came to visit your school recently. You were all very polite and respectful and it is clear that the adults who work with you are very caring.

We found that you are making satisfactory progress and reach standards that are average. Your teachers are working hard to ensure that they all have similar expectations of your work. We have seen that all teachers are using 'WALT' to help you in your lessons and this is helping you to concentrate on the task. We have asked them to make sure that they all now use your targets in the same way to make sure that you all know what you need to do next and that all teachers use the marking to focus on your targets.

It is good to see that many of you come to school every day and on time. There are still a number of you who do not manage to come to school regularly and it is important that you do, so that you do not miss out on any of the opportunities the school has to offer. We know that you enjoy school so coming regularly should be easy. We think that you behave well in school and you respect the adults who work with you.

Your headteacher wants to help you to do the very best that you can and we have asked her and her team to look at how you are doing in your lessons and to ask questions as to how you can achieve more. We have asked her and the teachers to challenge you even further and to make careful checks to help you reach high standards. Be assured that, to be the very best that you can be is not easy and you must never stop trying.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Susan E Lowry

Lead inspector