

Eaves Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104770
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	336362
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Damian Hackett
Headteacher	Mrs N Kearney
Date of previous school inspection	0 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including material on pupils' progress, safeguarding, the curriculum and 24 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, together with others from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment, progress and learning of all groups of pupils and, in particular, boys, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable in writing
- the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being
- the effectiveness of teaching, assessment and the curriculum in ensuring that all pupils achieve their potential
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in bringing about sustained improvements in pupils' learning.

Information about the school

The school is average in size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a morning class for Nursery-age children and one class for those of Reception age. The school provides wrap-around care through the before- and after-school clubs and the afternoon Educare pre-school group. These groups form part of this inspection. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Green Flag, Investors in People and Activemark awards. The headteacher was appointed in November 2009 and the acting deputy headteacher in September 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school is beginning to improve standards and provides a satisfactory education for pupils. Since the last inspection, staffing disruptions contributed to a dip in pupils' attainment to below the expected levels in 2007 and 2008 by the end of Key Stage 2. The school acted quickly to remedy this and improvements in provision resulted in a dramatic rise in pupils' attainment to above average in 2009 in English, mathematics and science. Detailed tracking evidence and inspectors' observation of pupils at work confirms that pupils' attainment is rising and the current Year 6 is expected to reach average standards by the time they leave in 2010. The senior management team is enthusiastic and determined to raise pupils' achievement further, although the skills of some in monitoring school improvement are at an early stage of development. The school evaluates its own strengths and weaknesses accurately but has not yet made its plans for improvement detailed enough. This, together with the as yet developing skills of some of the school's leaders, means that capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory, overall. Where teaching is good, teachers set work for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable, which is appropriately matched to their interests and capabilities. However, when work is too easy or too difficult for pupils, they begin to lose interest and progress slows. Similarly, marking of pupils' work does not always guide them in how to improve further.

Notable strengths in the school are the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children make good progress because of high-quality teaching and a stimulating play-based environment, good safeguarding procedures which contribute effectively to pupils feeling safe and pupils' good understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils behave well and attendance levels are average. However, more could be done to raise attendance levels and reduce the number of pupils who lose time in school through taking holidays in term time.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well with features such as a wide range of interesting before- and after-school clubs, which pupils really enjoy. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Effective links with the local community enable pupils to learn more about the values of those around them. Less well developed are the opportunities that pupils have to engage with communities beyond the locality and with people from different cultures and beliefs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment, progress and learning by:

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- developing the management skills of all senior leaders in monitoring school improvement
 - ensuring that activities set in lessons consistently match the individual learning needs of all pupils and especially of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable
 - improve the quality of marking in guiding pupils in what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Improve attendance by encouraging more parents and carers to take their children on holiday at designated holiday times.
 - Help pupils to develop a wider understanding of communities beyond their own local and school community.
 - About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons. In the best lessons they listen attentively, answer questions readily and work with classmates well. However, when pupils are working on tasks that are not well matched to their needs, they lose interest and occasionally behaviour slips. Where support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more vulnerable is well planned and closely focused on their particular learning they do well, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school.

Pupils start Year 1 with skills which are broadly average. Achievement in the school has been uneven in recent years particularly, but not exclusively, in classes in Key Stage 1. For example, in 2007 and 2008 attainment dipped in Key Stage 1 to well below average in writing. The school acted swiftly to remedy this and introduced daily, highly structured and effective big skills reading and writing activities, and focused closely on extending pupils' problem-solving skills in each class. As a result, standards rose to above average in 2009 in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of both key stages. Similarly, the school's monitoring and inspectors' observations show that pupils' current attainment throughout the school is average and for some pupils, in particular the more able, is above average. The current Year 6 is on track to attain standards in English, mathematics and science which are average overall.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in the community and they report that they feel secure in school. They are keen to take the healthy options offered and know what they need to do to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle as observed in the daily 'wake up, shape up' sessions. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and put a lot of effort into raising money and collecting goods for charities. A particular feature is how well they take on responsibilities around school. For example, in addition to the active school councillors, there are 'Eaves ears' who help those who may need support at playtimes. Pupils have a strong awareness of the importance of making their

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school 'greener' and eco officers proudly share their achievements so far.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Where the quality of teaching is good, lessons are planned well around clear objectives that are shared with pupils, relationships are good and little time is lost in gaining pupils' attention. However, when teaching is satisfactory, lessons are not always pitched at the right level. This is because teachers do not consistently use information gathered through assessments well enough to ensure that lessons fully match pupils' skills and understanding. A number of dedicated teaching assistants help support those pupils who find learning difficult. However, planning for this group of pupils is not always used well enough to ensure that they all achieve their full potential.

Pupils enjoy most lessons, and especially when the emphasis is on practical activities. With this in mind, an innovative, skills-based curriculum has been introduced and where this is used successfully, with a strong emphasis on problem solving, investigation and the use of information communication technology progress is good. However, this practice is not yet consistent throughout the school. The curriculum is enriched by the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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provision of Spanish lessons and a wide range of interesting visits. These opportunities and a good range of before- and after-school clubs and visitors help promote pupils' sporting, creative and artistic skills effectively.

Parents and carers speak highly of the welcoming environment and good care their children receive from all adults. However, parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and of the more vulnerable are not always fully involved in the review of their children's progress or in setting their children's individual learning plans. Arrangements to prepare pupils for high school are successful, and help to ensure a smooth transition to their next stage of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Clear leadership from the headteacher is instrumental in motivating staff to drive for improvement and with the commitment of the newly formed senior leadership team share a determination to continue the current upward trend in provision and outcomes for pupils. Staff are eager to do so but the management skills of some of the team are relatively new. There is a good system in place through lesson observations, work sampling and the setting of challenging half termly targets to track and check pupils' progress in each year group. The school improvement plan identifies what and how progress can be made in pupils' academic achievement.

The school has introduced effective support programmes, such as the big skills, to raise standards, for instance for boys in writing. It tackles discrimination and promotes equal opportunities for all satisfactorily. However, some pupils are not achieving their full potential because of inconsistencies in the guidance they receive. There is a wide range of expertise among the members of the governing body, they are supportive of the school and they meet their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily overall. They have ensured that all matters of safeguarding, including risk assessments and the safe recruitment of staff, meet government requirements. School leaders have taken satisfactory steps to promote cohesion in the community and devised a plan of action for the current year. There are strong links within the local community which strengthen pupils place in their immediate world. Plans to widen pupils' understanding of the ethnic diversity in British society and of life in developing countries are at an early stage of development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below the levels expected for their age and low in their language and social skills. All children make good progress towards the early learning goals and, when they move to Year 1, achieve age-related skills in all the areas of learning. The quality of adult support for learning is good and well-planned indoor and outdoor learning environments develop children's speaking, listening and social skills well. Children especially enjoy working outside. Boys are motivated to enjoy learning when they are outside by being given innovative tasks to do that involve speaking about and recording what they do. For instance, in Reception, children imaginatively transform wooden blocks from a castle into a ship and set about talking about how they can rescue their classmates who have fallen overboard. Children's personal development is good and they behave well. The children have warm relationships with adults and they play together happily.

At times, the quality of teaching is outstanding. This is evident as adults give children, as they investigate light and dark, opportunities to talk, ask questions, write, measure and count as well as play. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Plans present a very varied curriculum and have imaginative play and children's interests at its heart. The manager knows clearly how improvements can be made and plans to extend the good levels of communication, which already exist with parents and carers, lunchtime and Educare staff, into local nurseries to help children settle more quickly when they start Nursery. The welfare and progress of children are carefully monitored and all aspects of safeguarding are in place.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most of the small proportion of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are very content with the quality of education and care the school provides. Comments include, 'It is a caring and happy school,' and, 'Any concerns have been dealt with effectively and efficiently.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eaves Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	56	12	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	44	14	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	48	14	52	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	41	16	59	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	52	13	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	48	14	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	59	11	41	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



25 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eaves Primary School, St Helens, WA9 3UB

Thank you for being so helpful and polite during your school's inspection. The inspectors enjoyed the time spent with you and I am writing to let you know what we found out.

It was good to hear how much you like coming to school and enjoy learning and that you make satisfactory progress in your English, mathematics and science. It was also pleasing to hear about how safe you feel in school and that there is always someone to talk to if you have concerns. You behave well and you know about how to keep healthy and safe. Those of you involved in the school council or as Eaves ears take your duties seriously and responsibly look after others.

We judge that you go to a satisfactory school. You get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Your teachers and other staff help you to achieve satisfactorily in your lessons. The school takes good care of you and helps you to get on well together. The curriculum is satisfactory and you have some good opportunities for before- and after-school activities. The headteacher and governors want the school to become even better and so I have asked them to do several things to improve the school. These are:

- for senior leaders to raise your attainment and improve the progress you make in your learning
- to set work in lessons which is challenging and interesting for you
- to focus more clearly, when they mark your work, on ways to help you improve further
- to work more closely with you and your parents and carers to improve attendance levels
- to broaden your knowledge of different people and religions beyond your area.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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