

Eldon Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111589
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	337704
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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	496
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sheila Watson
Headteacher	Ms Julie Deville
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, taught by the school's 18 teachers; at least half of the inspection time was spent looking at pupils' learning. The inspectors observed as many of the school's other activities as possible and held meetings with governors, senior staff and pupils. They also analysed the school's documentation, progress data, welfare arrangements and the 92 questionnaires that were returned by parents, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- the progress of pupils in KS1
- the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1
- the teaching and learning of writing throughout the school
- how well the school reinforces basic skills through all subjects of the curriculum
- the extent to which improvements to the school represent outstanding or good capacity to sustain further improvement.

Information about the school

This is a large urban school, situated close to the centre of Hartlepool. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies and is generally slightly below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes. The school is the recipient of many awards including the NACE award for gifted and talented pupils, the Activemark for sport, the National Healthy Schools Award and the International School Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Eldon Grove is a good school, much improved since the last inspection. It has several outstanding features, notably the vision, drive and contagious enthusiasm in the leadership of the headteacher. She has inspired and empowered all staff to raise aspirations and create a happy, successful school where everyone matters. Staff take excellent care of pupils, so that they feel very secure and look after one another with solicitude. Parents are fully involved, especially those whose children have particular needs, although the school is highly successful in treating all pupils equally. The powerful community spirit within the school extends into the locality and beyond.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. From average levels at the last inspection, standards have risen at both key stages and are now above average. The school has done particularly well to overcome the relative weakness in pupils' writing. The quality of teaching and learning is predominantly good, although a small minority remains satisfactory. In such lessons, teachers do too much for pupils. Teaching is most effective and sometimes outstanding in Years 5 and 6. Here, expectations are higher, questioning is more skilful, the pace of lessons is swifter and topics are richer and more interesting. The curriculum is not motivational in all lessons but is effective for all groups of pupils and is boosted by a good range of activities outside lessons.

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and behave well, except when lessons fail to inspire them. They embrace a healthy lifestyle fully so far as is practicable for their age and instinctively look after one another. Pupils develop considerable self-esteem because they feel valued and are encouraged to play a full part in the work of the school. Activities within school and external partnerships help to give pupils a wide experience of cultural and multicultural issues.

The school has come a long way in a short time. A satisfactory school three years ago, its many strengths now are self-evident. Senior staff are highly effective, governors are very involved and all staff work cohesively, helped by new, efficient management systems that ensure consistency of approach. The school knows that there is still work to do to make all teaching good or better. Self-evaluation is accurate, if slightly generous on occasion, and has been central to the school's improvement. Standards continue to rise, the learning environment has been vastly improved, persistent absenteeism has been halved and the quality of care has risen dramatically. The leadership at all levels of the school has clearly demonstrated that it has outstanding capacity to develop this school even further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - the level of challenge for pupils, especially through questioning and expectations, is routinely high
 - pupils have more scope to take more responsibility for their own learning and to learn at their own speed
 - there are sufficiently diverse and stimulating opportunities for pupils to strengthen their basic skills across all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Classrooms are happy, positive places where they listen and respond well, particularly so when motivated by lively and fascinating topics. Sometimes, pupils are not responsive enough but this is only when teachers do not involve them all in discussions or pitch work at the right level. Even so, their behaviour is essentially good. Pupils readily cooperate in lessons and are very sensitive to others' views and feelings. Mutual concern is second nature.

Pupils achieve well. Standards have been rising in recent years and are now above average throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, average standards in recent years rose in 2009 to be above average and remain so, especially in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are closer to average: the school has succeeded in improving skills but the current Year 2 pupils had a lower starting point. The school has also been successful in Key Stage 2. More pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels in writing this year and standards in English are currently as high as in mathematics and science. Despite occasional variations, all groups of pupils achieve equally well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils are developing good skills to help them with life ahead, including fledgling business skills in their own mini-enterprise print business, currently producing mugs for Mothering Sunday. They are very aware of social responsibility. Not only is the school council pro-active, but all pupils have a voice. Pupils in Year 4, for example, instigated a healthy tuck shop, now run by the pupils themselves. Although packets of crisps are often evident in lunchboxes, pupils are eager to eat healthily. Some pupils, who prepare their own packed lunches, make considered and very nutritious choices. Pupils' willingness to establish an allotment within the community typifies their commitment to and awareness of local issues. Links overseas help to extend their awareness of different cultures. All pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, have French pen-friends. With a reduction in persistent absenteeism, overall attendance is beginning to rise from its usual average level. The school is also proud that pupils and parents have responded to their request for better punctuality. As a result, little time is wasted at the start of the first lessons.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The school has done very well to improve teaching and learning. Effective systems of assessment and planning, underpinned by professional development, have brought a consistency and renewed sense of purpose among staff. Lessons have clear objectives and work is firmly based on prior learning. The warm, supportive rapport between pupils and all staff instils a good work ethic in all pupils. Support for pupils with most need is gently encouraging but decisive. In the most effective lessons there is a real intensity in learning, promoted by riveting topics, strong knowledge from the teachers and a swift pace at the right level for all pupils. In satisfactory lessons, there is too much reliance on set techniques and guidelines and not enough flexibility and creativity in approach. Sometimes, teachers provide too much for pupils and do not allow them to develop their own learning skills and think matters through for themselves.

Teachers are increasingly broadening the curriculum they provide for pupils. They often teach skills within realistic situations so that learning has relevance and meaning. Resources, including electronic whiteboards are used thoughtfully. A video clip from the film 'Madagascar' certainly spurred pupils' interest in a Year 2 lesson, especially among the boys. Very effective provision for pupils' social and health development is found informally and formally throughout all learning. An excellent, whole-school approach to inclusion guarantees that all pupils can access not only the everyday curriculum but all the school's provision.

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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The school's quality of care is hard to fault. The formal systems to support pupils' health and safety are rigorous; all staff are thoroughly trained. Just as importantly, all adults display a high regard for pupils' well-being that naturally incorporates their families. It has proved challenging to improve attendance figures significantly but this has not deterred the school. Using a range of methods and liaising closely with outside agencies, persistent absence has been much reduced. Parents are receiving more guidance about how they can support their children and attendance at parents' meetings has risen; their appreciation of the school is high.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher has been the catalyst for change and the driving force behind the school's sustained improvement. Her resolute, yet pragmatic and enthusiastic approach not only galvanises and inspires colleagues but also ensures that they receive high quality professional development. She is supported extremely well by the senior leadership team, which typifies the cohesiveness of staff. The deputy headteacher, for example, has taken a leading role in the development of teaching and learning. The governing body is wholly involved in the school's development although its influence is at present slightly tempered by the number of new governors who are undergoing training. The governing body meets all its statutory requirements, including the very efficient safeguarding of pupils.

There is little, if anything, that the school does not know about itself. Shortcomings are rapidly identified and relevant plans are quickly instigated. The plans lack some detail and sharpness, yet there is no denying that they are very successful. Learning areas have been transformed into viable classrooms that minimise any distraction to learning. Considerable redecoration has resulted in a bright, uplifting environment. The school has yet to find a solution for its hall, woefully inadequate for a school of this size. It would struggle to meet its requirements for physical education without the goodwill and support of neighbouring schools. Monitoring of all its activities is regular and rigorous at all levels so that aspects of the school improve apace.

The school was judged to be satisfactory at the previous inspection three years ago. Strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage, behaviour and governance have been clearly maintained. More importantly, other aspects have not only caught up but, in some cases, have become even better. Links with parents are highly influential on the

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school's decision-making and support improved standards. External agencies have major impact on pupils' well-being and a good influence on learning. The school's passionate desire to be fair and just means that there is no discrimination and all pupils and adults have equal access to all that the school offers.

Ample opportunities exist for pupils to develop their awareness of all aspects of community cohesion. For example, they have lobbied councillors about dog fouling, they are preparing artwork to herald the imminent arrival of the Tall Ships Race and contribute to their own Eldon Grove TV. The school's current priorities include the further development of links overseas.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit from a good start to their school life in the Nursery and Reception classes. When they begin, their skills and abilities are much as expected for three-year-olds, although a growing number of new entrants have below average skills in some aspects. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and usually reach levels above those expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

Teachers have high expectations of children and the teaching of skills such as phonics is focused and successful. Children are able to initiate their own learning in the many activities inside and outside, but not always throughout the day as an integral part of all learning. Sometimes the teaching is too rigid. Some activities are innovative and provide a rich experience, such as role play in the well-stocked greenhouse. These opportunities inspire swift learning although not all activities are equally interesting. Staff are vigilant

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and efficient at observing and assessing children's progress so that they can guide learning more effectively.

Children are happy in the activities, work productively together and with adults and behave very well. They feel secure because staff take excellent care of them and are sensitive to their individual needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a very cohesive unit, so teachers' planning provides equally for all children. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader leads the area very well and has developed the key stage successfully, especially through staff training and close links with parents. For example, parents are actively involved in the Nursery children's learning at the start and end of the session. Good standards have been maintained and built upon, self-evaluation is very accurate and the welfare of the children is excellent. As a result there is similarly excellent capacity to sustain improvement as elsewhere in the school.

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	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents have a high regard for the school. The vast majority of those who returned the questionnaires were very satisfied with the school's provision and outcomes for their children. The inspection team agrees with their sentiments. A few expressed some concern about the quality of information about their children's progress. Inspectors consider that the school makes considerable effort to provide information for its parents and that it responds positively to their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eldon Grove 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 496 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	61	38	37	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	58	40	39	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	43	53	52	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	49	48	47	2	2	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	51	50	47	46	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	43	55	54	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	46	51	50	3	3	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)	37	36	58	57	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	49	47	46	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	40	53	52	7	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	40	56	55	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	51	47	46	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	54	42	41	4	4	1	1

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 pupil's 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.



8 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eldon Grove Primary School, Hartlepool, TS26 9LY

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed getting to know your school and really appreciated the part you played in the inspection of your school. As you know from school, your views do matter.

Your school has certainly improved a lot since the last inspection. It is now a good school with some elements that are outstanding. These include your understanding of a healthy lifestyle and personal safety, as well as your sense of community. The school takes excellent care of you and you behave well. The standards of your work are also improving and we were particularly happy with your progress in writing. The school is very successful in ensuring that all of you are treated exactly the same; your test results reveal that all of you achieve equally well. Your progress has improved because lessons are more interesting, teachers ask good questions, they are expecting more from you and give you the opportunity to find things out for yourselves. This is especially true for those of you in Years 5 and 6 and we have asked the school to try to make sure that all lessons are just as good.

We know that all the staff and governors, inspired by the excellent leadership of your headteacher, have the right ideas to make your school even better. Classrooms have already been improved and there will be new ones shortly. It is a pity that you do not have a hall suitable for your size of school. We are pleased that you benefit from lots of exciting activities and that you are developing your awareness of the world beyond Hartlepool.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Scott

Lead inspector

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