

Eggbuckland Vale Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113324
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	357319
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Goodchild

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	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Lancaster
Headteacher	Christopher James
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. During the inspection, 24 lessons and 15 teachers were observed and visits were made to the Hearing Support Unit and breakfast club. Pupils' books were inspected and the school's analysis of provisional national test data for 2010 analysed. Meetings about aspects of the school's work were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities. The school improvement plans, the School Improvement Partner's reports, minutes of the governing body meetings and policies and procedures and reports relating to safeguarding were scrutinised. Inspection questionnaires were completed by 165 parents and carers, which represented approximately one third of all pupils. The inspector looked at questionnaires completed by staff and pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

- how effectively teaching is matched to the learning needs of pupils with different abilities, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Eggbuckland Vale is a larger than average primary school situated on the outskirts of Plymouth. The majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Since the last inspection, there has been an increase in the number of pupils identified as having autistic spectrum disorder. The Nursery is part of the Hearing Support Unit and is an assessment centre for hearing-impaired children. About 25 per cent of pupils come from families in the armed forces and a higher number of pupils than the national average join the school throughout the school year. The school has an Intermediate 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

2

Main findings

Eggbuckland Vale Primary School is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features and has continued to provide a good standard of education for its pupils. A parent commented that 'This is a progressive school that takes on new initiatives and embraces change with children's interests firmly at the core of decision-making.' By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have become independent, behave well and have made satisfactory progress in their learning. However, assessment recording systems do not clearly identify children's next steps in learning to support them in making progress that matches that of the rest of the school. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress in their learning compared with their starting points. Provisional test results in 2010 show that pupils in Year 6 attained above average levels in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national expectations after making significant improvement in progress. Pupils attending the Hearing Support Centre, and those identified with autistic spectrum disorder or other special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers due to the well-targeted and high-quality support they receive. Teaching observed during the inspection was good overall, with examples of outstanding practice, but there is a variation at times in the quality of teaching. In a small number of lessons seen, assessment information was not used systematically to plan lessons to ensure that all pupils are challenged in their learning.

In the school's welcoming and secure learning environment, pupils' behaviour and relationships are excellent. Hearing-impaired pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities in the school community and Year 6 pupils act as excellent role models. Pupils are quick to make friends and offer support to each other. This is particularly noticeable amongst the significant number of pupils who have parents and carers serving in the armed forces, some of whom are deployed on active service. Pupils who have experienced this provide support and information to others to help them cope with these additional stresses. The provision for care, support and guidance is outstanding. Links between home and school are excellent. Several parents and carers commented on the high-quality support from the parent support adviser who, they say, goes beyond her role to help them.

The curriculum is good and is described by the school as 'experiential'. There is an excellent range of enrichment activities, such as residential visits, trips and after-school clubs. However, the school has recognised the need to improve the relevance of the curriculum to meet the current needs of all its pupils by involving them in decisions about what topics they would be interested in studying.

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. There is a strong team ethos

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in the school and a commitment to continuing improvement. The governing body has significant strengths, and has a good working partnership with the school. Self-evaluation is thorough, involves all stakeholders and has clearly identified areas for improvement. The key issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that all teaching is of a consistently high standard
 - ensuring that ongoing assessment is used consistently to plan lessons at the appropriate level for pupils' ability.
- Further develop the curriculum by involving pupils in decision-making about topics they would like to study.
- Improve the provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage to match that of the rest of the school by improving assessment systems so that children's progress can be tracked against their starting point and early learning goals.

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

Pupils are proud of their school and there are many opportunities for them to develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities for themselves and others within the school community. The culture of signing within the school gives pupils a strong awareness of differing needs within society and ensures that pupils with a hearing impairment take part fully in activities. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility. A Year 5 boy, for example, could not wait to be a lunchtime corridor monitor when he moved up to Year 6. Play buddies organise play zones and activities, such as skipping and space hoppers at lunchtime, and encourage positive play. The school council has an effective role in decision-making and in representing the views of pupils. Members are developing skills in financial management by establishing a bank that pupils can apply to for loans when setting up fund-raising activities for a range of charities, such as Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. This enthusiasm is taken into the classroom and contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make in their learning. They work well together and support each other's learning, particularly when in mixed-ability groups, for example constructing displays on India in a geography lesson. Pupils are keen to contribute to class discussions and 'mistakes' are used as learning opportunities. In a mathematics lessons, for example, a pupil identified that there was a deliberate mistake but the rest of the class had to work this out for themselves. Pupils are aware of the need to develop healthy lifestyles and they benefit from daily 'leap into life' sessions for younger pupils and 'Active8', a sports programme organised by the Community College. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported in accessing sports initiatives, such as 'Podium Para Olympics' and a football tournament. Overall attendance levels are affected by family holidays taken in term time when parents return from active service.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons, teachers' expectations are high, the pace of learning is rapid and activities are planned to engage all pupils in the learning process. For example, innovative approaches are used to develop pupils' understanding of more complex texts, such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', by engaging a group of actors to work with pupils to bring the text alive. Effective use is made of ongoing assessment to inform planning so that lessons build on prior learning and challenge all pupils. However, in a few lessons, this was not evident and tasks set do not always ensure appropriate challenge for all pupils. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning, particularly for hearing-impaired pupils and those identified with autistic spectrum disorder. This is one of the reasons why the care and welfare of pupils is outstanding. Links with external agencies, including the armed forces and health professionals, are excellent and ensure that the school provides effective and well-focused support to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. Parents and carers serving in the armed forces are particularly pleased with the way their children have settled into the school and been supported during stressful times. The breakfast club is

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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well run and organised and provides healthy food for pupils at the start of the day. There is a good focus through the school on developing pupils' creativity and key skills through themed cross-curricular activities. Themed weeks, such as 'French week', give pupils the opportunity to enrich and share their learning across the school community. A range of visits enrich learning opportunities and are used well as a stimulus for work in the classroom. There are good partnerships with the Academic Council and Community College that extend opportunities for pupils such as the gifted and talented. Specialist sports coaches introduce pupils to a wide range of sports and provide pupils with the skills to develop healthy lifestyles.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	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?

There is a shared sense of purpose evident within the school and a commitment to continual improvement. Self-evaluation is rigorous and effective in identifying areas for improvement. Areas of weakness have been successfully tackled and the school is now well placed to continue to improve. The governing body are well informed about the school's work and rigorous in undertaking their monitoring and challenging role. The school's commitment to ensuring equality for all is evident through its work. The school's partnership with parents and carers is excellent. Their views are canvassed annually and taken into account as part of the school's self-evaluation process. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are excellent. Provision for community cohesion is good. The school has well-established links with its local community and has achieved the Intermediate International Award for its work with a school in Africa. Developing links with a school in the Midlands are beginning to raise pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures found within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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

Nursery children in the Hearing Support Unit are well supported and encouraged to integrate with their hearing peers. There is a strong focus on developing their communication skills. During their time in the Nursery, children make satisfactory progress in their learning and development and most transfer into the Reception class. Children starting in the Reception classes come from a large number of pre-school providers with skills and experiences broadly typical for their age. They settle quickly into the secure learning environment and enjoy coming to school, some not wanting to go home at the end of the morning session. There is an appropriate focus on developing social skills and children are learning and playing well together. Children benefit from a high-quality and well-resourced vibrant environment and planned activities utilise this well. For example, children use gym equipment, such as ropes and wall bars, on a weekly basis. This allows them to develop their physical skills and undertake more adventurous climbing activities in a safe environment. Creativity is encouraged and children are excited about learning. An 'aeroplane trip to Africa', for example, initiated by children, included the making of passports and a 'hazardous' trip across a swamp to avoid hippopotami. Teaching assistants joined in well with play and were effective in their support role.

The quality of teaching children received during the inspection was good. The newly-appointed teachers are developing assessment systems that will enable them to track children's progress effectively across all areas of learning and give them the information they need to plan children's next steps in learning effectively. The progress children made against their early learning goals in 2010 was satisfactory. Evidence from learning journals from this year did not give a clear picture of the progress children had made from their starting point against their early learning goals and did not provide sufficient information to ensure that children were being challenged to achieve. For those children who need additional support, the provision is excellent, as in the main school. Parents and carers are fully involved with the school and teachers are accessible to talk to them at the beginning and end of sessions. By the end of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have gained in confidence, their behaviour is good and most are independent learners.

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Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It runs smoothly on a daily basis and systems are in place to ensure that the care and welfare of children is of a high quality.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A high number of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and nearly all were very happy with their children's experience at school. They think their children are safe and enjoy school, teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. Comments made particular reference to how the individual child is valued and catered for and how pupils are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves. Service families are particularly grateful for the understanding and support they receive. A small minority expressed concerns about the quality of the school's engagement with parents and carers, in particular information about the progress their children was making and how they could support learning at home. They also had concerns about lack of challenge for more able pupils in some year groups and too much time spent watching DVDs. Inspectors judge that links with parents and carers are excellent and there is an open-door policy for parents and carers if they have any concerns about progress. Inspectors found that there is variability in teaching and that assessment information is not used systematically in all classes to ensure that all pupils are challenged in their learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eggbuckland Vale 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	99	60	64	39	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	112	68	50	30	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	45	79	48	11	7	0	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	39	87	53	9	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	89	54	72	44	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	41	89	54	9	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	47	82	50	3	2	0	1
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)	76	46	80	48	3	2	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	77	47	78	47	5	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	41	89	54	4	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	36	92	56	5	3	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	97	59	66	40	1	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	60	60	36	6	4	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eggbuckland Vale Primary School, Plymouth PL6 5PS

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently and for talking to us about your school and your work.

We found that your school is a good school and that it has some outstanding features. You make at least good progress in your lessons because you work hard and behave well and last year reached levels by the end of Year 6 that were above those expected nationally. You receive a high standard of care and consequently feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. A particular strength of your school is the way that you accept responsibility for running the school community and organising events that benefit the rest of the school and those less fortunate than yourselves. Everyone is given the same opportunities to be involved in the life of the school.

We have identified some improvements to make your school an even better place, so I have asked your school to:

- make sure that all teaching is of a consistently high standard and that all lessons are consistently planned to provide work that is challenging and is better matched to your abilities
- continue to develop the curriculum by involving you in decision-making about topics you would like to study
- continue to improve the teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to match that of the rest of the school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Goodchild

Lead inspector

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