

Eastnor Parochial Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116805
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	312408
Inspection date	22 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Kessell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Dunthorne
Headteacher	Susan Lowry
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Eastnor Ledbury HR8 1RA
Telephone number	01531 632509
Fax number	01531 636 036

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Eastnor Parochial Primary School is well below average in size. The school draws its pupils from a wide area and almost all are from White British backgrounds.

The school has gone through considerable upheaval during the current academic year. The school's headteacher tragically died during the autumn term. An acting headteacher ran the school for the remainder of the term, and was appointed as headteacher in January 2008. At the same time, the school became subject to local authority reorganisation and was threatened with closure. Staff turnover for the current year has been high.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features, particularly pupils' personal development and the leadership and management of the headteacher. The school has successfully come through a period of turbulence and uncertainty. It has grown and developed on the solid foundation that was already in place. Parents appreciate the caring Christian ethos and 'family feel' of the school. 'Children grow in confidence socially and academically' and 'My child is extremely happy' are typical comments that reflect the views of almost all parents.

Children get a good start in the Reception Year, where provision has improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils leave at the end of Year 6 having achieved standards that are well above average. This represents good achievement. However, there are inconsistencies in progress and pupils have not always done as well in English as they have in mathematics. The issues have been rigorously addressed. Progress is now even across each stage of the school and the gap between pupils' performance in English and mathematics is closing.

Pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is good, they enjoy school very much and classroom relationships are extremely positive. Teachers have high expectations and lessons move along at a good pace. Pupils respond well to the challenges provided by their teachers, knowing that good quality support is also available if they begin to have difficulties. It is noticeable, on entering classrooms, how many smiling faces there are, along with an obvious enthusiasm and maturity amongst the pupils to discuss their work. Pupils' individual needs are met well in English and mathematics, although lessons in other subjects of the curriculum do not always provide such challenge or such a wide range of learning opportunities. For example, there is often too much reliance on worksheets in subjects such as geography and history.

Aspects of the school's good curriculum, such as the wide range of additional activities, contribute substantially to the pupils' exceptional personal development and well-being. Pupils know a great deal, for example, about how to stay fit and healthy through diet and exercise. The daily skipping sessions that all pupils undertake are exhausting just to watch! Attitudes and behaviour are excellent. An aspect of personal development that is slightly less secure is pupils' understanding of other faiths and beliefs that are found in our modern society. Parents indicated through the pre-inspection questionnaires how well the school looks after their children and pupils commented that they feel very safe at school. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies such as the health service, local schools and other parts of the community to meet pupils' needs and to increase the opportunities available to them. Academic guidance is developing well, with recently introduced pupil tracking and target setting.

At the heart of the school's success are good leadership and management and particularly the highly effective contribution made by the headteacher, who has achieved a considerable amount in a short period of time while leading the school through a very difficult period. This is appreciated by both the pupils and parents. Staff and governors are all fully involved in improving the school, and the successes already achieved show that the school has a good capacity to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but is generally above the level expected for this age group. It was slightly higher for the current Reception children, although their writing and calculating skills were at lower levels. Children settle into school well and make good progress, whatever their starting points. School data indicates that the pupils currently attending the Reception class are on course to reach above average standards by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching is good and a strong emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening and early writing skills. For example, sounds and letters are taught especially well to children whose difficulties with this aspect of their learning are recognised. Personal and social development is a notable feature and parents are particularly impressed at how confident their children become. During the inspection, children spoke sensibly and maturely to inspectors about their work and activities. The curriculum offers an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and those that children work at independently. The outdoor area has limited space, and this sometimes inhibits activities that promote the children's physical development. The Reception teacher has accurately identified this as an area for development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide the children with greater challenge and a range of learning opportunities in subjects such as history and geography.
- Increase pupils' understanding of other religions and beliefs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Small year groups lead to year-on-year variations in standards but generally, standards are well above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. School data indicates that there has been some uneven progress in the past, especially at Key Stage 1, and that the gap in standards and achievement between English and mathematics has been quite significant. However, the school has made good progress in addressing these issues through, for example, a successful school focus on improving pupils' writing. Equally, pupils now make at least good progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because their needs are successfully catered for, through work that is accurately matched to their needs and the high quality support provided by their teachers and teaching assistants. A number of parents of pupils with learning difficulties spoke very positively about the progress their children had made as a result of the school's provision.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are very polite, mature, confident and cooperative. Their outstanding personal qualities, together with their good academic achievement, prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community. Older pupils, for example, are particularly helpful towards the younger children, looking after them when walking to and from the church. The very good consideration shown for others makes the school safe and welcoming for all. As one pupil stated, 'Everyone gets on well together.' Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school. However, pupils' knowledge of other cultures and beliefs is more limited. Pupils clearly

enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the high levels of attendance. They arrive in the morning keen to get on and look forward to the day ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils are actively involved in their learning as a result of a variety of approaches to lessons, including whole-class teaching, effective collaborative working in small groups and independent learning. Teaching is challenging and pupils are well motivated. They want to do well. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they are doing because learning intentions are clearly explained to them. Questioning is used well and pupils of all abilities are prepared to make a contribution to a lesson, knowing that their views will be welcomed by their teacher and classmates. Pupils talk confidently about their work, whether they are older pupils in Year 6 talking about their work in literacy, or the youngest children in Reception explaining about a maths investigation. Pupils' work is marked regularly and pupils find their teachers' comments supportive and helpful. However, not enough marking shows pupils how to improve their work or move to the next stages of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal qualities are developed well through the school's curriculum. Visitors to school, such as the police and members of the health service, successfully promote safe practices and healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities provided by the school, such as yoga and cross-country running, and there are many opportunities for pupils to excel in music. Some aspects of the curriculum are innovative. Philosophy for children has been introduced and pupils spoke positively about how it enabled them to air their views about simple matters that developed into 'more complex topics.' During the inspection, older pupils were looking forward to their forthcoming residential visit to Snowdonia, where they would have a good opportunity to take part in a range of outdoor pursuits. Some of the work that pupils undertake in the wider curriculum is too prescriptive. In subjects such as history and geography, worksheets are used too often and pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to develop new skills or use their own initiative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'The school offers a lovely supportive environment' is a typical comment from parents. The Christian ethos of the school is much in evidence and reflected in the strong relationships between pupils and staff and amongst the pupils. The good pastoral care and support is a significant feature of the school. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Academic guidance has developed well over the last few months. Although targets are still embedding within the school, pupils talk favourably about these in writing and mathematics. One pupil said, 'We now have goals to achieve', whilst another identified targets as contributing to improving their writing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Pupils, parents, staff and governors comment most positively on the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. She sensitively and caringly brought the school through one of the most difficult periods in its history, maintaining staff and pupil morale and providing a very clear sense of direction. Her accurate analysis of the school's many strengths and areas for development has led to a range of recent improvements. Good working relationships have been developed with other organisations and community groups that benefit the pupils. For example, strong links have been established with the Eastnor Castle Estate, who own the school site. The leadership and management roles of other staff are developing well under the guidance of the headteacher. They are becoming more involved in self-evaluation and monitoring school provision. New members of staff have settled into the school well and are developing their responsibilities. Governance has improved rapidly over the current academic year and is now good. Governors fully understand and fulfil their role in holding the school to account for the standards it achieves. They have successfully developed processes that enable them to independently monitor and evaluate the school's provision and are in a good position to act as 'critical friends.'

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eastnor Parochial Primary School, Ledbury, HR8 1RA

My colleague and I would like to thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you about your work and other school activities. You go to a good school and some aspects of it are excellent. For example, you all behave very well, get on with each other and really enjoy what you are doing. I was exhausted just watching you all skipping at the beginning of the day! Where do you get your energy from? It must be all that healthy eating and exercise that you do.

You make good progress in your work because teaching is good. This means that you leave school with standards that are well above average. You have exciting visits planned, visitors come and talk to you, and you have many clubs and opportunities to play a musical instrument. Although many of your lessons are interesting, I have asked the school to try and encourage you to think for yourselves in some subjects and complete fewer worksheets. It would also be interesting for you to find out more about the different beliefs and backgrounds of other people so I have also asked the school to provide you with more opportunities to do this.

The adults in the school look after you well. This means you feel safe at school. You also look after each other and it was good to see the older pupils looking after the younger ones when you went to church. Exciting things happen at your school because of the excellent leadership and management of your headteacher. She is helped well by all of the other staff and governors. They have plenty of other ideas to make your school even better and you can help them by continuing to be as enthusiastic about learning as you are now.

I hope the older pupils had a good time in Snowdonia and that it did not rain too much.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Kessell Lead inspector



23 April 2008

Dear Pupils

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Lead inspector