

Ellistown Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119914
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339553
Inspection dates	1–2 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Saunders
Headteacher	Margaret James
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the vast majority of their time looking at learning. They observed all teachers and visited 13 lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at: the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, planning for community cohesion, attendance figures, evidence of lesson observations and information from the questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 58 parents and carers.

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

- the consistency of pupils' progress in all year groups
- the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to promote community cohesion and teach pupils about the diversity of faiths and cultures in the world.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school, where numbers are increasing steadily. The proportion of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to most schools. The majority of these have reading and language difficulties. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is average. A private organisation manages care provision before and after school so it is inspected separately. The school has suffered considerable staffing turbulence, including several long term absences, over the last two years. The school has gained Healthy Schools and Investor in People awards.

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

Most pupils enjoy school, behave well and make satisfactory progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading because of good work by the school to encourage a love of books. At Key Stage 2, attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average in English, and average in mathematics and science. Progress is particularly rapid in Years 4 to 6 where the teaching is consistently good, or outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively in class and in small groups. They make satisfactory progress and show great pride when answering questions in class.

Pupils speak highly of their teachers, particularly because 'they explain things clearly and make lessons fun.' In some outstanding lessons, the teachers inspire pupils, maintain high standards of behaviour and ensure that those of all ability make the best possible progress. However, in a few lessons, pupils make slower progress when teachers set work that is either too easy or too hard, or allow a minority of pupils to disrupt the learning of others.

The school has done much over the last two years to make the curriculum more interesting. Pupils enjoy the broad themes that give them good opportunities to hone their reading and writing skills in topics about the solar system or dinosaurs. The curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well, but provides too little to develop their cultural awareness or promote community cohesion. While they learn something about different cultures and faiths in religious education lessons and special weeks on Hinduism or Judaism, this is not planned well enough to give them a comprehensive understanding of how other people in the world live and worship. In addition, the links with schools having a contrasting ethnic balance are only just beginning.

The school has a good partnership with parents and carers, who feel that the school cares for their children well. They appreciate, as one commented, 'the way all staff do their utmost to support them when they have difficulties.' They are well-informed about their children's progress, and always feel welcome in school.

The headteacher and senior leaders have done well to maintain standards at a time when pupils have had to adjust to a number of different teachers in a year. They work well as a team, with high expectations of what the school can achieve. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The systems to evaluate the provision and action to rectify weaknesses have led to some good improvements, particularly in pupils' attainment in English, safeguarding procedures and the partnership with parents and carers. They recognise, however, that the evaluation of the quality of

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teaching, community cohesion and cultural provision has not always led to significant improvements. Now, with a settled staff, the school has the capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the consistency of good teaching and learning by all teachers following the example of the best ones and:
 - providing work that meets the needs of the different abilities in the class
 - using effective and consistent methods to manage pupils' behaviour.
- 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

The lessons observed, work in pupils' books and the tracking of their progress show that, at Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress. They do well in reading, and enjoy reading for pleasure. The regular phonics sessions work well, and pupils enjoy using the cards that help them build sounds into words. In mathematics, pupils relish the many practical activities that help them learn to count with understanding. Their attainment in writing is average, but sometimes the tasks for the more able pupils are too easy, and few move on to the higher levels in their work. At Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils have made very good progress since the start of the year and learn at a rapid rate. They read with expression, write exciting stories about life in the Second World War and work out complicated problems in mathematics. Their speaking skills develop very well because teachers give them many good opportunities to talk to an audience and discuss issues with one another. Drama plays an important part in this, as was seen when pupils performed an excellent play to Reception children about flying pigs and frogs. The young children were transfixed by the story and hugely impressed by the performers. Pupils enjoy science but, while their attainment is average, a few struggle when asked to design their own investigations.

Throughout the school, progress is slower when pupils with different abilities are given similar tasks, and the lower ability groups are only half way through when others have finished. Occasionally, a few pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour interfere with the learning of others in the class. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those with reading and language difficulties benefit from effective and imaginative teaching that helps them tackle new words with confidence.

Pupils try hard to succeed and show a pride in their work. They work well with talking partners and listen carefully to the views of others. Their good awareness of how to look after their bodies is evident in the way they talk knowledgeably about the best foods to eat and choose the healthy options at lunchtime. This has been recognised recently by the Healthy Schools award. Pupils feel safe and free from bullying or any form of racism.

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They are proud of their community, and take responsibility readily. They think deeply about issues such as poverty and the hardships faced by people in wartime, and are quick to help anyone who is upset.

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

How effective is the provision?

The inconsistencies in the quality of teaching explain why progress is significantly faster in some classes than others. The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils and use assessment information well to plan work to meet the needs of different abilities in the class. They make effective use of technology such as interactive whiteboards and data logging devices so that pupils have fun learning and understand difficult concepts. In some outstanding lessons, pupils hang on the teacher's every word and persevere even when the task seems beyond them. In one lesson, a pupil who was grappling with a complex problem threw his hands up in triumph and exclaimed, 'Miss - I've got it!' Occasionally, however, pupils' learning slows because teachers talk to the whole group for too long or make too little use of assessment information to provide work for the higher and lower attaining pupils. Not all teachers manage pupils'

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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behaviour well or apply rules consistently, and this restricts the amount of work covered in lessons. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked pupils not to call out and then praised someone who shouted out the correct answer. Soon, all were calling out their answers.

The school has developed an interesting curriculum with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, while providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic talents. The topics are enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors and fruitful links with nearby schools. The many extra-curricular clubs are popular, and help pupils develop their skills in gardening, sporting and creative activities. The well organised personal, social and health education curriculum helps pupils learn about personal safety and the dangers of activities such as smoking, unsupervised internet access and misuse of drugs.

The good care, guidance and support make pupils feel secure and valued. Those whose circumstances make them vulnerable benefit from sensitive support and do well. Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education by comprehensive links with other schools. The school works very closely with parents and outside specialists to provide effective support for pupils with learning, medical and emotional difficulties. Despite a good number of adults supervising pupils outside at playtimes, play is sometimes boisterous and minor injuries are not uncommon.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a strong leader who is highly respected by pupils, staff, parents and carers. She has helped create a happy school where pupils emerge as confident, well-rounded individuals. The headteacher is supported well by other staff with management responsibilities who share her determination to provide equal opportunities for pupils and tackle any form of discrimination. The leaders use data on pupils' progress well to show where pupils, or their teachers, need extra support. However, the systems to monitor and evaluate teaching do not always result in improvements to learning.

In order to promote community cohesion, the leaders have developed useful partnerships with local schools, churches and businesses that give pupils a reasonable awareness of life outside school. Visitors representing different faiths and backgrounds and themed weeks focusing on life in different countries add to these experiences. There is, however, no formal plan to develop community cohesion or any way to

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measure the impact of the school's actions.

The governing body supports the school well, and are developing their skills in interpreting data on pupils' progress. They are not afraid to hold the leaders to account, and play an important role in maintaining the robust safeguarding procedures. The finances are managed well, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. They make good progress, particularly in their reading, writing and number skills. Adults care for children well, while giving them many opportunities to think for themselves. As a result, they develop good personal and social skills, behave well and grow into confident, independent learners.

Parents and carers appreciate the good teaching that enables children to enjoy school so much and want to come to school every day. Adults are very good at making learning fun, and children enjoy writing about fierce dinosaurs as much as learning how to play safely on the outdoor climbing equipment. The children in the mixed age class do well, but sometimes find the work too hard and are unsure what to do. Adults observe and record children's progress carefully, and use this information well to plan the next steps in learning.

The curriculum is planned well to provide children with a good balance of work and play. Adults use the well-equipped outdoor area creatively so that children continue their learning outside.

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The good leadership and management mean that staff work well as a team and help children to feel safe and develop a love of learning. They have a clear understanding of how to improve the provision in order to raise achievement.

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

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the school. They particularly appreciate the way their children learn how to keep safe and live healthy lives. They feel their children do well at school, but a few comment that the teaching is better in some classes than others and that the number of temporary teachers has affected their children's progress. A small minority say that the behaviour of a few pupils affects the learning of others. These comments reflect the inspectors' findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ellistown Community 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 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 221 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	60	21	36	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	67	18	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	45	25	43	5	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	36	31	53	3	5	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	26	45	25	43	6	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	50	23	40	5	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	43	31	53	0	0	2	3
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)	16	28	30	52	5	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	40	29	50	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	43	24	41	7	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	36	28	48	4	7	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	28	48	22	38	4	7	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	50	22	38	7	12	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 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.



3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ellistown Community Primary School, Ellistown, LE67 1EN

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you work hard in lessons and play so happily outside, even when it was so cold. Your school is satisfactory, which means that some things are good and others could be better.

This is what we found out about your school.

You try hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress. You do especially well in reading because you love books so much.

The youngest children get off to a good start in school.

Most of you behave well, although a few of you find it hard to remember the rules.

You know a lot about how to live healthy lives and stay safe.

You think deeply about people in the world who are not as lucky as you.

Your leaders help the school to run smoothly.

The activities provided for you are interesting, and you enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things like music, gardening and sport.

Your teachers make learning fun and help you when you find things difficult.

All staff at the school look after you well and make you feel safe.

To make your school even better, we have asked your school's leaders to.

Make sure your work is at the right level for you so you make good progress in all lessons and in all classes - you can help by listening carefully to your teacher.

Help you learn more about how different people in the world live and worship.

You can help too by doing your best work in all lessons and always putting your hand up to answer questions.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston

Lead inspector

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