

Eskdale Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122545
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340168
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Richard Marsden

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Allum
Headteacher	David Slee
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around 20% of inspection time in lessons, observing 10 teachers and visiting 13 lessons. They held meetings with governors, pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documentation, attendance records, evidence of pupils' progress, planning documents, and questionnaires from pupils, staff and 190 parents.

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

- the achievement and standards of current pupils at all levels, to determine whether the high standards of the past are being maintained or exceeded
- the level of support and challenge offered by the governing body, to determine whether suggestions for improvement, noted at the last inspection, have been implemented.

Information about the school

The school is of average size. It draws most of its pupils from the immediate locality, although increasing numbers are choosing to join the school from farther afield. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. A very small minority have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The school is a designated training school, and has received a number of awards and accolades including the Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Gold, and International Schools 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. It puts the well-being of all pupils, and the raising of their self-esteem, at the heart of all it does. Pupils attain very high standards, but the school sees education as being far more than merely preparing pupils for examinations: it takes extremely seriously its role of preparing pupils to be happy, confident and well-rounded individuals, ready to take their place as global citizens.

Over several years pupils' results in national tests have been significantly higher than average, and their progress rates have been exceptional. Again and again in lessons inspectors found pupils to be deeply engrossed in their work, eager to learn, and keen to progress. Inspectors noted warmth and a deep level of mutual respect and trust in the relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves. This creates a climate in which pupils are not afraid to take risks and in which learning can therefore thrive. Pupils are keen to come to school because lessons and other activities are exciting and stimulating. Some parents commented that their children enjoy school so much that they want to attend even when they are ill!

The school has a growing reputation for the innovative methods which it has developed in partnership with Nottingham Trent University to promote pupils' writing, and which it now exports to other schools both nationally and internationally. These methods enable pupils to produce highly sophisticated writing - including their own novels which are professionally bound and made available for others to read in school, or even screenplays which are then made into the finished film. This has very effectively addressed the suggestion for improvement made at the last inspection for more able pupils to be challenged to reach higher standards in written work. These techniques have also led to improved progress across other subjects, where teachers are likewise rigorous in their pursuit of excellence.

Teachers take particular care to ensure that all groups of pupils feel valued, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Children from a nearby army base attend the school, as do children who are temporarily in this country while their parents are at the local theological college and university, and the school is particularly sensitive to the needs of such families and goes out of its way to ensure that they integrate fully.

Throughout the inspection pupils' behaviour was exemplary. Inspectors were also impressed by the unsolicited reports the school receives from members of the local community praising the pupils' conduct when they are out and about.

A feature which immediately strikes the visitor is the number and range of ways in

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which pupils take on duties themselves and serve their community. As a result, pupils develop a sense of responsibility towards others and confidence in public settings. This, along with the school's excellent promotion of the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology, prepares them admirably to take their place in the working world. The school itself is a harmonious community and the curriculum provides many opportunities to expose pupils to community issues locally, nationally and internationally. The way the school incorporates this work into the day-to-day experiences of pupils and evaluates its impact is not yet as fully developed as leaders would like.

The school has a very clear idea of its own strengths, and very sharply focused plans for further improvements. These are as a result of rigorous, regular self-evaluation and a determination to be satisfied with nothing but excellence for all pupils. The capacity for ongoing improvement is therefore very strong. The last inspection report recommended that the governing body be strengthened. The school has addressed this, so that governors now have a good understanding of the school and its work. Governors regularly spend time in lessons, and they are in close contact with teachers, parents and other stakeholders. They now hold school leaders to account in order to influence the school's direction, but they know that this aspect of their role can be sharpened further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further refine the already strong leadership and management of the school by:
 - increasing the rigour and challenge provided by the governing body
 - embedding the promotion of community cohesion more firmly into pupils' day to day experiences within the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils join the school with standards which are above those found nationally, and their rates of progress over several years have been significantly better than national rates in English, mathematics and science. In lessons observed, pupils made excellent progress, displaying very high standards in their work. Boys and girls progress equally well, and the small number of pupils who speak English is an additional language also make excellent progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported by learning support assistants and by flexible curriculum arrangements, and, as a result, these pupils also make excellent progress. Teachers are extremely adept at presenting material in ways which motivate the pupils and make them want to learn, so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is significantly higher than average.

Pupils speak of their school with enormous pride. They state confidently how safe they feel in school, and they share readily what they have learned about things such as internet safety, drugs and bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are good ambassadors for a healthy lifestyle, explaining with enthusiasm foods they eat or avoid and why, and how much exercise they take.

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Pupils avail themselves of an outstanding range of opportunities to take responsibility and serve their community. They serve, for example, as librarians - posts for which they must apply formally and have an interview. They run their own 'fruit tuck' business, they write their own newspaper, they have a very influential school council, and they initiate charity fund raising events, often raising very impressive amounts by their own efforts. The school ensures that all groups of pupils avail themselves of these opportunities, and that no one is left out.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also excellent. They have many opportunities to reflect on values, and a strong moral code is understood and accepted by all. A strong international dimension to the school's work, which includes links with China, America and Spain, means that pupils are very well exposed to cultures other than their own, and ensures that the school is successful in eliminating discrimination and stereotypical views.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are very well known as individuals. The achievements of all are celebrated

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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publicly, however large or small. The school takes great care to ensure that new pupils settle quickly into the school and that all are well prepared as they move on to their secondary school.

In preparing lessons and other activities which motivate and excite pupils, teachers go not one extra mile but many. They use information and communication technology very skilfully to bring learning to life. In one outstanding literacy lesson, for example, the teacher brought in what she called 'camera adverbials' to help with the teaching of grammar. By digitally manipulating the visual images, pupils very rapidly grasped a complex grammatical idea, and, as a result, progressed very rapidly in their writing. The school, in partnership with Nottingham Trent University, has developed innovative ways of developing pupils' literacy. The school is now training others in these methods and receives enquiries from other schools in this country and abroad about the techniques, as their success has been so remarkable.

Marking - using the school's 'block and bubble' technique - has a consistency across subjects and classes which makes it very clear to pupils what they need to do to improve. They respond well to the advice given. Pupils as well as teachers give feedback to others in lessons, and this reinforces the learning for all. Individual progress is monitored in great detail so that the school can very quickly spot pupils who might be falling behind or who are at risk in any way, and can respond accordingly.

The broad and balanced curriculum caters well for the needs of all groups of pupils. Teachers take every opportunity to relate learning to the working world, such as in an outstanding mathematics lesson where the class examined compound interest rates and value added tax. The out of school activities are many and varied, and are hugely appreciated by both boys and girls. They include many types of sport at a high competitive level or just for fun, residential visits, cooking, art, and music. Spanish has been taught for several years, well ahead of the statutory requirement to teach a modern foreign language at primary school, and pupils benefit from music lessons using orchestral instruments provided by the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his staff strive rigorously for excellence: equality of opportunity for all pupils features very strongly. All staff have a leadership or coordinator role and they work together as a highly effective team. Morale is high and there is an energy and

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vibrancy about their work which permeates the school. Staff speak enthusiastically about their plans and ambitions and are modest about the many successes of their pupils. The school has a very clear view of its strengths and how it wants to develop further.

Governors have taken seriously the recommendation for improvement noted at the last inspection. They are deeply committed to the work of the school. They are well informed and are prepared to offer challenge in order to influence the strategic direction of the school. They are keen to develop their role, further, however, so that their insight is even sharper, their challenge more keenly focused and their impact even more influential.

Teaching is rigorously planned and monitored and staff support one another very well, sharing ideas for improvement. Parents and carers are welcomed warmly into school. The school communicates with them very effectively so that they have a clear idea of how their child is doing and how they themselves can offer support. Pupils benefit from the school's cooperation with many partners, including, for example, other local schools with which it provides activities for gifted and talented pupils, local businesses, and Nottingham Forest Football Club. It draws on the full range of services to support more vulnerable pupils. A very willing Friends of the School group provides volunteer adult help whenever needed.

Statutory requirements for safeguarding are rigorously met. They are subject to systematic and regular refinement. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion, but leaders realise that more could be done to make this aspect a more prominent part of pupils' day-to-day experiences in school, to embed it more deeply into different areas of the curriculum and evaluate its impact more incisively.

The school's financial management is very sound, and it gives excellent value for money.

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	1
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	1
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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1
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Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were received from more than 80% of parents and carers. A very small minority said they felt that the school was not doing enough to help them support their children's learning or keeping them informed about their children's progress. Inspectors noted that this aspect of the school's work has recently been reviewed however, and improvements put in place. Parents and carers expressed overwhelming approval for the school, many adding their own comments of appreciation. Typical of those received were the following:

'I am totally happy with all aspects of school life.'

'Eskdale is an amazing school. They can't do enough for my child.'

'I would recommend this school to anybody without hesitation!'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eskdale Junior 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 190 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	126	66	56	29	6	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	129	68	57	30	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	93	49	80	42	8	4	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	57	74	39	4	2	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	116	61	65	34	3	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	97	51	72	38	13	7	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	103	54	77	41	5	3	2	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)	91	48	77	41	3	2	5	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	103	54	77	41	5	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	104	55	66	35	7	4	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	83	44	82	43	16	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	127	67	52	27	4	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	128	67	57	30	2	1	2	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.



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eskdale Junior School, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 5FN

Thank you all for being so wonderfully welcoming and helpful to us when we visited your school recently. We were very impressed with your outstanding school. Your parents value very highly what your school does for you, and many of you were extremely proud to tell us how much you appreciate your school. Here are just a few of the things we liked:

Your headteacher and the people who run your school are doing their job very efficiently.

Teachers plan exciting lessons for you, and you work extremely hard in them and make excellent progress.

Your behaviour is excellent and everyone is keen to make the school a happy place where everyone feels cared for.

You live healthy lives and know how to stay safe.

You enjoy a great variety of out-of-school activities.

You have an amazing number of opportunities to take on responsibilities in your school and the wider community. These help you grow into confident and mature young people and prepare you very well indeed for your future lives.

Even the best schools can improve further and we have asked your teachers to give even more thought to ways in which your school can help your community become stronger. We have also suggested that the governors find more ways to support the headteacher to make your school better still.

Finally, thanks once again to the Cookery Club for their excellent home-made soup!

My good wishes to all of you for the future.

Yours sincerely

Richard Marsden

Lead inspector

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