

Ellingham Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122289
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	359214
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Andrea Thomas
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Lakey
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2007
School address	Ellingham Chathill Northumberland NE67 5ET
Telephone number	01665 589233
Fax number	01665 589233
Email address	admin@ellingham.northumberland.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed four teachers and 11 lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and analysed 43 questionnaires from parents and carers, 17 from pupils and 10 from staff. The team also looked at documents and policies, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, all the information the school had collected about the pupils' progress and the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

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

- Current attainment and progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4 and in mathematics and writing.
- How effectively teachers use assessment to help judge progress, especially when pupils are working independently.
- The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation to identify and address any underachievement as early as possible.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals varies from year to year, but is broadly average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is generally above average. The school has many awards including Healthy School status and Activemark for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. The school has experienced many changes in leadership since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

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

Ellingham is a good school. It is held in very high esteem by pupils, staff, governors and parents and carers alike. The following quotes from parents and carers are typical of many, Ellingham School gives my child a secure, friendly environment to learn in – it is everything you could wish for in a first school', and, 'Fantastic school – we cannot praise its staff enough'. These tributes illustrate the outstanding way that the school engages with parents and carers and involves them in their children's education.

There have been many improvements since the previous inspection. These have resulted in some significant gains in pupils' achievement and in many areas of personal development, such as behaviour and attendance, which is above average. Pupils are welcoming and respect each other. Pupils have very strong spiritual development, stemming from the school's close association with the church. They are involved in community projects such as 'Breathing Spaces' where they help to create and tend places for reflection in the church's graveyard. Areas of relative underperformance in Years 3 and 4 and in mathematics and writing have been addressed, so that achievement is now good throughout the school in these subjects. Teaching is good, but in some lessons learning objectives are not always clear and pupils are not sure of what they are aiming at or how well they are doing. The management of teaching and learning has improved, although there is not always enough emphasis on learning when carrying out lesson observations. As a result, attainment is not as high as it could be, nor is progress as fast as it might be.

The school has managed significant changes in leadership well. The small size of the school means that all teachers have some management responsibility. In the relatively short period of time the headteacher has been in post, she has empowered and galvanised the staff into an effective team who support each other very well. Monitoring and self-evaluation are accurate and have improved significantly. However, tracking is not yet sufficiently refined enough to bring about improvements in all pupils' progress as fast as it might do. Nevertheless, the many improvements that have occurred in such a short period of time, and the cohesiveness and enthusiasm of the staff ensure that the capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further and accelerate progress by:
 - making sure in lessons that the focus of learning is in clear, measurable parts so that the learning of individual pupils can be checked more easily throughout the lesson

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- giving clear guidance to pupils so they can always tell how well they are learning in each of their activities
- ensuring that lesson observations always have a close focus on the pupils' learning
- refining the school's tracking systems so that any underachievement is identified as early as possible and strategies are put in place to address it.

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

The small nature of the cohorts means that the ability of the different cohorts can vary greatly from year to year. Pupils enter school with a wide variation in skills. The school's data show that overall those skills are below those typically expected. Pupils behave well and they thoroughly enjoy their education. This was apparent throughout the inspection – in assemblies, at break times and in lessons. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 music lesson pupils were delighted at the prospect of learning to play ukuleles. The same pupils were seen cooperating well with each other in a mathematics lesson as they worked in pairs, setting challenges to create five and six digit numbers from their number cards. In a Year 1 and 2 science lesson pupils enthusiastically used a computer programme on their laptops to learn about the conditions that plants needed to grow. This demonstrated their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills well. Pupils' achievement is good. Throughout the school pupils of all abilities make good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their good progress means that they leave in Year 4 with attainment that is securely in line with that expected nationally.

The school is a harmonious community and pupils are very respectful of each other and towards adults. They say that they feel very safe in school. They have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy and the school's involvement in the local authority's sporting partnership enables them to participate in a wide range of sports. They also enjoy the physical routines in lessons such as 'Activate' and say that this gets them ready to learn. They are proud of the many displays of their work, particularly their art work, and of the links they have with a school in Uganda. They talk of the importance of helping others and willingly take the responsibility of jobs such as table monitors, worship monitors and selling Fair Trade produce in their tuck shop. Along with their above average attendance, good ICT skills and sound literacy and numeracy skills, this prepares them well for their future. Pupils could not think of anything that they would want to change about their school, describing it as, 'Good because we do lots of exciting things.' One pupil summed up how she felt, saying, 'It's just really nice to be here as everyone is so kind'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are enthusiastic and make learning fun. Lessons are planned well with appropriate varied activities and proceed at a brisk pace. The work is usually adapted well for the differing needs of the pupils and the good proactive approach of the teaching assistants ensures that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can access their work well. This ensures that they make good progress in line with that of their peers. Teachers usually discuss with pupils what it is they should be able to do by the end of each task, but sometimes this is not clear enough so that it is difficult to judge individual progress. In addition, clear success criteria are not emphasised often enough to enable the pupils themselves to say how well they are doing. Teachers' marking is thorough and helpful in making it clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning.

The curriculum is well organised, weaves together different subjects and is enriched well by visits to places of interest, events at school and a wide range of clubs. Many of these opportunities contribute to the good progress that pupils make in their broader personal development. For example, pupils were seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson eagerly producing information booklets about their recent visit to Beamish open air museum telling the history of the North East of England. Pupils were particularly interested in the farming equipment they saw there, some of which had been donated from their area. Older pupils learn French and all have the opportunity to grow their own vegetables. Some aspects of the curriculum are relatively new and have not yet had time to impact fully on accelerating the rate of the pupils' progress. The good care, guidance and support the pupils receive is a strength of the school. There is a very warm and caring atmosphere

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in school and great importance is placed on providing sensitive support to all pupils, including those whose circumstances have made them especially vulnerable. Pupils are known well as individuals. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils appreciate the high level of care provided for them. Links with the neighbouring middle school are strong, preparing pupils well for the next stage in their learning.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's enthusiasm and drive has helped to secure many improvements in the short time she has been in post. All staff and governors are dedicated to enabling pupils to achieve their best both academically and personally, and staff morale is particularly high. Comments from members of staff, such as, 'The staff and pupils are a pleasure to be around', show just how much they enjoy and value working at the school. Self-evaluation is effective in helping to drive improvements, although the checking of all pupils' progress is not as rigorous as it could be, meaning achievement is not rising as fast as it might do. Currently, all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, reflecting good equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school's commitment to tackling all forms of discrimination. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the work of the school and know its strengths and what it needs to do to improve. They help shape the direction of the school.

Safeguarding procedures are good, with extensive, clear policies and secure risk-assessment systems. Health and safety and child protection arrangements are very thorough. All members of staff have regular training in these matters and are well informed. Monitoring of welfare-related aspects, including attendance and behaviour, is good and is helping to secure improvements. Parents and carers agree strongly that the school takes account of their views very well, and provides them with excellent help in support of their children's learning, for example through family workshops. While the promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally is very good, links with other schools nationally are still developing. There is a wide range of very effective partnership involvement, including the county's schools sports partnership. This is helping the pupils to have a healthy lifestyle and to gain confidence in helping and working with others. The school achieves good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 start in the Nursery with a wide range of skills that varies from year to year, mainly due to the small numbers of children entering. Overall, their skills are below those expected, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Excellent induction procedures, including home visits, help the children to settle quickly and get a confident start to their school life. Most children play together well and are well behaved. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception years and by the end of Reception, reach the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning, with some achieving more highly. The environment is very bright and stimulating and ensures that children have a variety of engaging and creative activities which sustain their interest. Children have a good understanding of what it means to have a healthy lifestyle. They were seen enjoying making healthy food with play-dough. The teacher skilfully built in literacy and numeracy development by encouraging the children to describe clearly and count what they had made. Adults provide well for children's welfare. There are well-established routines to promote their personal development, such as tidying up and hand washing. The improved, well-organised outdoor space has enhanced the children's physical development well. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Adults regularly assess what the children know, understand and can do. The quality of these assessments has improved, although the identification and addressing of any relative underachievement and the building of this more firmly into lesson planning is not as robust as it might be.

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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

Almost all parents and carers returned the questionnaire and they are extremely positive about all aspects of the school. For example, all felt that the school keeps their children safe and that the children enjoy school. This was very evident during the inspection. A very small minority of parents and carers felt that their child was not making enough progress. This may well be the case for a minority of pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ellingham Church of England Aided First 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	84	7	16	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	63	15	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	53	15	35	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	70	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	84	7	16	0	0	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)	29	67	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	81	7	16	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	65	11	26	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	51	17	40	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	74	9	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	79	9	21	0	0	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.



28 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ellingham Church of England Aided First School, Chathill, NE67 5ET

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing you learn in class. We worked very closely with your headteacher and also spent time talking to your teachers and governors and looking at your work.

Yours is a good school that is getting better. You develop well and achieve good results in your work. It is a very happy environment where you behave very well and enjoy being there. You told us that you like the school just as it is and that you would not want anything to change. You also told us that you feel very safe in school and that the adults in school care about you a great deal. We agree with you that they look after you particularly well. Your parents and carers told us that they are extremely happy with all aspects of the school and that they appreciate the help that the school gives them to help you with your learning. Your headteacher, teachers and governors work together well as a team to keep improving the school. We have asked your headteacher to make the school even better by:

- asking your teachers to check how well you are doing more often during lessons
- making it clear to you what it is you should be able to do in each of your activities in class so that you can always tell how well you are doing
- making sure that teachers look more closely at how well you are learning when they are observing your lessons
- monitoring your progress more closely so that if you are not doing as well as you might be your teachers can help you to improve more quickly.

We would like to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead inspector

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