



Emscote Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125566
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293294
Inspection date 26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Marion Wallace

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	All Saints Road
School category	Community		Warwick
Age range of pupils	4-7		CV34 5NH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01926 491433
Number on roll (school)	121	Fax number	01926 491433
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ann Blight
		Headteacher	Moira Dickson
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Emscote Infant School is smaller than most infant schools and serves a residential area in Warwick. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Children's attainment when they start school is generally below average. There is no nursery but the majority have attended the privately run pre-school on the school site. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. In 2005, the school gained the silver ECO award. The present headteacher has been at the school for five years and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2004. The school has a stable staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of Emscote Infant School is good. All who work in the school help to create a warm, caring learning environment in which pupils develop a positive attitude to learning and confidence to tackle new work. Pupils are happy to be in school and the majority of parents are positive about the school. One parent commented: 'The school has a very warm and homely atmosphere, the teachers are friendly and easy to talk to and always make you feel welcome'.

Attainment on entry to school is generally below average, with a significant number of pupils having learning difficulties or disabilities. The majority of pupils achieve well, considering their prior attainment. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a good curriculum and are well taught, and consequently they make good progress. The good progress is maintained in Year 1 and 2 in response to good teaching, although the school recognises that a few more able pupils could achieve more. Standards in Year 2 have been steadily rising over the last two years and are now broadly average. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well taught and they make equally good progress.

The teachers are extremely well supported by a skilled team of teaching assistants who ensure all pupils are fully involved in the lessons. Teachers plan interesting lessons but their planning lacks a sharp focus on identifying work for different ability groups, especially the more able pupils. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in developing systems to check on pupils' progress and set targets. Staff acknowledge, however, that this aspect needs further development to ensure all pupils make the best possible progress during Years 1 and 2.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to interesting lessons. Relationships are good and the learning environment is safe and stimulating. Consequently, pupils develop a good level of self-confidence and positive attitudes. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles at school because this aspect is well promoted. They take pleasure in participating in the Eco project and in contributing their ideas to the sensory garden. The school does not yet have a school council but pupils feel that their views are valued. Care, guidance and welfare are good. Very good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into school life, and a good level of care is given to all pupils. The school provides a good imaginative curriculum and uses the local environment well to support learning. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well and has identified areas for further development. Governors are supportive but new to their role. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has the good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information to improve lesson planning in Years 1 and 2 to ensure a closer match of work to ability, and to improve the quality and usefulness of pupils' individual targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with below average standards, and their speaking and listening and social skills are at a particularly low level. They make good progress in all areas of learning in both Reception classes because activities are well planned, they enjoy what is offered and there is superb additional support for children who need it. Standards are still below average when children enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, they continue to build on the good progress, and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement, given that nearly one third of the pupils have learning difficulties. Results of the national tests for 2006 were higher than in 2005. The school has successfully focused on improving standards in reading, writing and mathematics but does not yet ensure that more able pupils are given challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities generally make good progress towards their individual targets, both in lessons and in small groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. There is a strong focus within the school on developing healthy lifestyles. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities such as the after-school sports club. They explain that they feel safe and have confidence to approach staff with issues of concern. The 'friendship stop' in the playground encourages pupils to care for one another. The school emphasises the importance of attendance and punctuality, and attendance levels are broadly average. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behaviour is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Assemblies have a strong Christian influence and pupils are developing an appreciation of their uniqueness and the importance of being special. There are close links with a local church and they are made aware of other faiths through visits to Hindu and Sikh temples. They are developing an awareness of another school in Sierra Leone and have helped provide drinking water. Pupils are prepared well for the future, particularly in the way they learn to become independent and take responsibility for themselves, devising their own class rules.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

In Reception, children enjoy each day because work is well planned, enabling them to choose a variety of interesting activities to develop their learning. Good teaching continues in Year 1 and 2 and pupils continue to make good gains in their learning because they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants. Pupils with learning

difficulties or disabilities are very well supported in small groups, and sometimes individually, and this ensures they make the same progress as their peers. Pupils enjoy the imaginative ways lessons are made interesting. For example, they spoke animatedly about the gardening project and how they had helped to prepare the ground for planting vegetables. In the best lessons, very good relationships and secure class management help create the right atmosphere for learning. The work is well matched to the pupils' differing needs and it challenges them so that they respond and learn well. In the less effective lessons observed, expectations for behaviour and work produced could have been higher, especially for pupils of higher ability. There are sound procedures to check on the progress pupils make but this information is not always used rigorously to match work to ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum helps pupils' social, emotional and academic development. The personal and health education programme has promoted a strong caring ethos in the school, so that pupils care for one another well. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well met, often through well-deployed staffing. Arrangements for gifted and talented pupils are satisfactory and the school recognises the need to ensure their skills are fully developed. Effective use is made of the school grounds and links with the local community to enrich learning. The playground is often used as an extension to the classroom to give a variety of experiences to support lessons. There is a good range of after-school clubs and pupils reported that they enjoy these activities enormously. The school has placed a strong focus on developing a creative and imaginative approach through the use of theatre workshops, visiting artists and educational visits to enrich learning. The recent puppet workshop depicting the story of Red Riding Hood helped Year 2 pupils develop their writing skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Adults have good knowledge of pupils as individuals and provide good support and care. The good levels of supervision ensure that playtimes and lunchtimes are enjoyable and safe for children. Pupils stated that any concerns were dealt with quickly by staff. The school provides well for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils' academic targets are satisfactory, but are not rigorous or precise enough to ensure that all pupils are challenged effectively. The school works well with parents and has good links with other schools and the community. It works very well with other agencies to ensure that the needs of children who are in care are well met. Procedures for protecting pupils are robust.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have secure plans for the next stage of development and all staff are committed to a common sense of purpose and contribute to the good atmosphere in the school. The headteacher manages this small school effectively. Measures to bring about improvement in pupils' standards and achievement, such as improved monitoring, support and training for teaching assistants, are beginning to bear fruit. There are satisfactory procedures to track pupils' progress and the school acknowledges that this is an area for further development. Support is very well targeted for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities but the focus on ensuring the more able children reach their full potential is not yet sharp enough. The school improvement plan reflects the headteacher's awareness of the issues to be addressed and strategies to bring about effectiveness. Governors are new to their roles but they visit the school regularly and are well informed and committed. Parents are positive about the school and feel their children are happy and well cared for.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your school and learning about the exciting things you do, such as the Eco project and the Red Riding Hood puppet workshop.

- We think your school is good in many ways:
- when you first come to the school in Reception, you make a good start to your education and do very well
- you do well in your work because you have good teachers
- you enjoy school and are enthusiastic when doing activities
- you are taught the importance of healthy eating and enjoy your sports club
- you told us you feel safe and well supported. Your 'Friendship Stop' helps you to care for others
- Mrs Dickson runs the school well and makes sure that those of you who need extra help get it.

To make things even better we have suggested something we think will help:

- teachers should keep a very close check on how you are getting on so that those who manage the work easily can be given more difficult work, especially in Years 1 and 2.

We enjoyed our day in your school very much and wish you well for the future.