

Eskdale Junior School

Eskdale Drive, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 5FN

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher's clear direction and ambitious plans for the school, shared by all staff and governors, has continued to improve the school since its previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well and make outstanding progress. Standards are high.
- Teaching is never less than good and much is outstanding. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are consistently high. The strategies used to teach writing are outstanding.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and respond extremely well to the demanding tasks set for them. Their enjoyment of school is obvious and is reflected in high rates of attendance.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together; although teachers sometimes use their teaching assistants too narrowly in supporting pupils' learning.
- Teaching is exceptionally well led and managed. Teachers constantly share ideas and expertise in order to challenge their pupils further.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils feel very safe in school because standards of care and welfare are high.
- Activities are carefully planned to provide pupils with skills that are highly relevant for their future lives. However, opportunities to develop partnerships with local schools are sometimes missed.
- The governing body is well organised and highly effective in carrying out its role.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classes and observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons. They were accompanied by the headteacher during six of these.
- They looked at work in pupils' books, listened to a number of pupils reading in Year 6, and held discussions with pupils about their learning and experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior members of staff. The lead inspector interviewed two members of the governing body and spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents including the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, safeguarding checks, documentation relating to teachers' performance and data about pupils' attainment and progress.
- They took account of 39 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey, and considered the views of 24 members of staff who completed a questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mike Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eskdale Junior is similar in size to the average primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the use of teaching assistants within lessons so that they support the learning of pupils of all levels of attainment.
- Make greater use of partnerships with local schools to enrich pupils' experiences.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- From starting points that are typically above average, the school is highly effective in developing pupils' skills as thoughtful and independent learners. In all their learning, pupils are clearly focused on the 'big five', which are the school values that are clearly displayed and constantly referred to by teachers. These values summarised as: taking care, responding to challenge, aiming high, acquiring skills and knowledge for life, and showing self-discipline, underpin all aspects of pupils' learning.
- The learning and progress of pupils across all year groups is never less than good and, in many instances, is outstanding. Pupils are highly articulate and motivated learners. They learn exceptionally well because of highly skilled teaching and the good amount of individual attention they receive in smaller than average-sized classes.
- Data for the past three years show that pupils have consistently made rapid and sustained progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils' attainment overall has been significantly above the national average. Information about the current Year 6, together with observations of pupils' performance in lessons and work in pupils' books show that attainment in 2013 is most likely to be even higher than in 2012.
- Pupils develop excellent skills in speaking and listening. This is because they are given many opportunities to discuss their learning and express their ideas. For example, in a design and technology lesson, pupils in Year 5 provided well-considered evaluations of each other's techniques in making pirate hats. This dialogue also demonstrated very clearly pupils' commitment to the school value of responding to challenge.
- The large majority of pupils join school with a secure understanding of phonics (the sounds made by letters). Consequently, pupils read with accuracy and confidence from an early age. Their skills in reading rapidly improve and enable them to access learning across all the subjects that they study. By Year 6, they competently tackle complex texts. During TRAWL sessions (Teaching Reading And Writing Links) pupils learn how to apply their knowledge of the techniques used by authors to improve their own writing. As a result, pupils write confidently, and use carefully considered phrases to improve their text.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is a real strength. For instance, in a Year 4 lesson pupils applied their knowledge and skills in multiplication and in using data about costs as they worked out the best way to spend a class budget for books and equipment. This challenge effectively promoted the school value of acquiring skills and knowledge for life as pupils worked independently and then in groups to tackle this 'real life' problem. It also held the interest of pupils and provoked a lot of thoughtful discussion as they discussed priorities and then calculated overall totals from unit costs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because their specific needs are thoroughly explored and fully supported, in particular by skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funds are very well targeted to ensure that the achievement of these pupils at least matches that of other pupils in the school. The school responded quickly and effectively to the disappointing performance of the Year 6 pupils eligible for premium funding in 2012, when the attainment of these pupils was the equivalent of more than a year below that of other pupils in English and mathematics. Current data show that the school has effectively closed the gap,

and in Year 6 these pupils are matching the high attainment of other pupils in reading and are working at or above nationally expected levels in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The headteacher has led a sustained drive to build on the high quality teaching found during the previous inspection. When asked what they considered to be the most significant developments over the past three years, senior teachers were unanimous in selecting teaching and learning. In particular, they highlighted more effective teamwork and sharing of expertise among staff, and improvements made in pupils' understanding of their individual 'learning journeys' and of the next steps that they need to take to improve further.
- Teaching and the quality of classroom support are outstanding. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire fully agree. Teachers are skilled in capturing and holding pupils' interest and imagination through carefully structured and exciting learning opportunities.
- Activities planned by teachers are carefully designed to ensure a high degree of challenge. Senior members of staff refer to this as 'top-down planning' in which teachers carefully construct tasks that are pitched at levels above those normally expected for the age of the pupils. During lessons, teachers are highly skilled in using questioning to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and use the information gathered to fine-tune the level of challenge as required.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use their expertise skilfully to help pupils learn exceptionally well. For instance, in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 6, the teacher provided a high degree of challenge through an investigation. In this activity, pupils worked well together in using non-standard tools (sheets of paper) to solve problems such as: 'How many sheets are needed, when tessellated, to cover the area of the whiteboard?'
- Teaching assistants are often used to support pupils who frequently need help in order to learn effectively. This means that teachers sometimes work less with these least able pupils, while the middle and higher ability pupils do not benefit from the extended and intensive small group support that teaching assistants are skilled in providing.
- Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils create a highly positive classroom atmosphere that helps inspire pupils to learn.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school has successfully maintained and built on the outstanding behaviour and safety of pupils which the previous inspection identified.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning result from their enjoyment of the interesting and exciting learning opportunities provided for them. Pupils take great pride in their work. The presentation of work in pupils' books is of a high standard.
- Pupils have a keen awareness of the 'big five' values that the school is highly effective in promoting. Pupils clearly understand that they are at school to learn skills that will be important in their future life, and sensibly apply themselves to their work. They take good care of one another and value the excellent relationships that are developed. They are resilient and show good levels of perseverance in tackling the challenges provided for them. They have a keen sense of fair play and understand that they have to accept responsibility for their actions.

- Pupils' behaviour is invariably impeccable. Pupils show great courtesy and good manners towards adults and each other, and instances of unacceptable behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils report that any inappropriate behaviour is quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have a very clear understanding of what bullying is and the different forms that it can take. However, there have been no instances for the school to report on.
- All parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children feel safe. This is because the school provides outstanding pastoral care for its pupils. Pupils are very well informed about avoiding risk or danger, for example when searching the Internet or using email.
- Rates of attendance are consistently above the national average. Instances of pupils arriving late for school are minimal.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Parents and carers greatly value the quality of education that the school provides for their children. All of those who completed the online survey think that the school is well led and managed and would recommend this school to another parent.
- The headteacher leads the school with energy and total commitment. He provides a very clear view about how the school should develop which parents, carers, staff and governors fully subscribe. Leaders and managers at all levels have extremely high expectations and show clear determination in attempting to move the school to a level of effectiveness that is 'beyond outstanding'.
- Leaders know how effective the school is because they regularly check on all aspects of the school's work. They are rigorous in ensuring that teaching is never less than good and frequently outstanding as a result of training and coaching and through the management of teachers' performance. Senior leaders set a clear example for colleagues through the quality of their teaching.
- Productive links with a local secondary school have resulted in the school training some of the older pupils as sports leaders so that they can share their expertise with younger pupils. However, the school recognises that its partnerships with local schools are less productive than they might be in helping enrich pupils' learning.
- A particularly noteworthy feature of the school's highly effective curriculum is the way in which it develops pupils' expertise as writers by developing their skills in analysing the impact of text on readers. These TRAWL projects are open-ended and involve a lot of individual support for pupils by teachers. The end product, which is that all pupils produce a 'published' storybook each year, is highly valued by pupils. Those interviewed said that they regularly take inspiration from their own reading choices when developing their stories.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next phase of their education and demonstrate excellent skills in citizenship.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place and are rigorously maintained.
- The local authority regularly monitors the school's effectiveness and, because of its strong performance provides no direct support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is extremely well led. The Chair of the Governing Body plays a strong role in helping drive improvements. Under his leadership, the governing body closely monitors the school's effectiveness and provides clear challenge in holding leaders and all teaching staff to account for the school's performance. Governors ensure that the performance of staff is effectively managed, understand the arrangements that link teachers' pay to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and challenge the headteacher to ensure that teaching targets are met. Governors have a clear understanding of the way in which pupil premium funding is used and its impact on pupils' achievement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122545
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	412491

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	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Allum
Headteacher	Robin Scruton
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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