



Eccleston Mere Primary School

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 104783
 LEA St Helens

Inspection number 277217
 Inspection dates 19–20 June 2006
 Reporting inspector Mr F Carruthers

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

Type of School	Primary	School address	Saleswood Avenue
School category	Community		Eccleston
Age range of pupils	3–11		St Helens
			WA10 5NX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01744 678280
Number on roll	300	Fax number	01744 678281
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs I Pritchard
Date of previous inspection	October 1999	Headteacher	Mr P Friend

Age group 3–11	Published [add date]	Reference no. 277217
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school draws pupils from a much wider locality than its immediate neighbourhood and from a variety of different social and economic backgrounds. Its number on roll has risen since the last inspection and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The range of pupils' learning difficulties is wide and includes pupils with complex disabilities and some with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are an above average number of looked-after children but very few pupils learning English as an additional language. The range of attainment on entry to the Nursery is average overall and includes pupils with identified special needs. The school has gained several awards for many aspects of its work, such as the inclusion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is an outstanding school. The exceptional vision of the headteacher, which is shared with and embraced by all staff, drives forward the quality of education, so that the school is always striving to do its best for the pupils. The excellent ethos enables all pupils, whatever their talent, personal qualities or special educational need, to feel secure and to do their very best in everything. Pupils achieve exceptionally well so that standards in English, mathematics and science are very high by the time they leave school in Year 6. This is also true of performance in the arts, humanities and sports. All groups of pupils, including the most able, the more vulnerable, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress. The outstanding quality of teaching and learning accounts for this achievement and is consistent across all age groups and classes. Pupils' personal development and well-being are similarly excellent. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and love school. The quality of care, guidance and support for the pupils is excellent and helps to promote these high standards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding, as is the curriculum for the whole school. It is embellished by a very wide range of activities both in lessons and outside school hours. Leadership, management and governance are excellent and parents' views are overwhelmingly positive. Improvement since the last inspection has been outstanding and the school has excellent capacity to improve. It gives outstanding value for money.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

The school has an excellent awareness of its own performance and any areas for improvement have been identified and tackled by the school already.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. All children in the Foundation Stage, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the few learning English as an additional language, make excellent progress. The overwhelming majority reach the learning goals expected of children at the end of the Reception year and several children are working at much higher levels. This is because of the outstanding provision. This rate of progress continues in Key Stage 1. In the current Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics, with high proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in reading and writing.

In Key Stage 2, progress continues to be outstanding and standards in Year 6 in most years are significantly above average. The school identified weaknesses in performance in both Years 2 and 6 last year and overcame them. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 have been restored to their previous high levels, the school's challenging targets have been exceeded, and a high proportion of pupils are on target to reach the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Looked-after children achieve as well as their peers and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress. The achievement of the few with multiple disorders is at times astounding.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils show their enjoyment for school through their punctuality and above average attendance. The view of pupils is that, 'lessons are not boring because we do a lot of practical work'. Their personal qualities reflect outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' refined manners and respectful attitudes result in harmonious relationships and exemplary behaviour. Exclusions are very rare and only made after all alternative strategies have been explored. The pupils are well aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and take full advantage of the wide range of sports activities provided. Their efforts have won them two Healthy Schools awards. The pupils learn about the potential dangers of drugs and other substances and the importance of trusting relationships. They feel safe in school and are adamant that playtimes are free from bullying. Older pupils operate 'friendship stops' in the playground to ensure no one feels left out. Membership of the school council, charity fund-raising, environmental work and helping daily around the school are some of the ways the pupils learn important life skills needed to live within the community. Combined with well-developed skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), the pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. There is strength in depth across all year groups and all subjects. Parents reported to inspectors that their pupils' experience of different teachers is consistently positive. Lessons are

exceptionally well prepared and have very good pace. Teaching assistants and those who work with individual pupils are thoroughly prepared as to the challenges of each lesson and what their roles are to be. Specialist teaching is used to excellent effect and there is exceptional support from visiting specialist teachers and coaches. Teachers' expectations are very high and this is clearly evident in the high standards of presentation in pupils' books and the quality of displays around school. All classrooms are vibrant places of learning. The expertise of all staff is excellent and this is a major contributor to the high quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils become independent learners quickly and have excellent attitudes to work. The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are extremely thorough. They contribute very positively to setting targets for year groups and individual pupils, as well as helping the pupils to understand how well they are doing and what the next steps are in their learning.

Grade: 1

Curriculum and other activities

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. It is planned creatively to provide exciting, relevant experiences for all learners and promotes their outstanding achievement. Particular strengths are in music, physical education and geography because of the way teachers' expertise is used. The teaching of Spanish from Year 3 onwards means that statutory requirements are exceeded. Issues from the last inspection have been fully dealt with. Pupils' health and personal safety is of paramount importance and the programme for personal, social, health education and citizenship ensures they are prepared very well for issues they may face. The school could not provide more for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The quality of support from highly skilled staff is exceptional. Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about Friday afternoons when they select from an extensive range of enriching activities such as arts, crafts, environmental work, ICT or visits to places of interest. This provision is augmented by the calendar of visitors, educational outings and excellent choice of clubs outside lessons.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils. Staff display a high level of commitment to every child and take every opportunity to promote the pupils' personal development as an integral part of their learning. They know the pupils exceptionally well and pupils are involved in tracking and planning their own progress towards specific targets. The school provides a wide range of programmes, tailored closely to individuals, whatever their gifts, talents or particular needs. Pupils benefit from excellent role models from the

wider community. Parents greatly appreciate the school's efforts to involve and inform them. Through praise and recognition of their achievements, pupils' self-esteem is developed very successfully. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Children most at risk, several of whom have been excluded from other schools for behavioural problems, are exceptionally well supported by the school. As a result, pupils flourish and are extremely well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership, management and governance of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and vision. Parents are unanimous in their respect for him. The statement, 'I would find it extremely difficult to make one negative comment about Eccleston Mere', is their commonly held view. The headteacher's excellent leadership is illustrated in the way pupils who have social difficulties, emotional difficulties or multiple disabilities are fully integrated into school. The school has deservedly won national recognition for its dedicated work in breaking down many of the barriers to achievement faced by these most vulnerable learners. It has improved the exceptional quality of its provision for all pupils, despite budgetary constraints, and is on course to turn a deficit into a balanced budget in the current financial year. With a settled, cohesive staff and supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher and senior management team, the achievement of all pupils is outstanding.

School self-evaluation is both reflective and challenging and, consequently, all staff have clear and accurate views of the school, which match closely the judgements of the inspection team. Systems for monitoring performance are excellent. Governors are closely involved in this process and, as well as being informed critical partners, they are entirely supportive of the headteacher's vision. The school has improved in many ways since the time of the last inspection, not just in addressing the key issues but in establishing the school as a beacon of quality. An example of its thriving provision is the forthcoming extension to the Nursery of a Children's Centre.

Grade: 1

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	1	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	
The <i>standards</i> ¹ reached by learners	1	
How well learners make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	N/A
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	N/A

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21 June 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to while we were with you. We felt it was a privilege to visit your school. Now we want to share with you our findings.

Your school is outstanding!

For instance:

- the staff take excellent care of you all and teach you exceptionally well
- you work very hard and it is clear that you love school, especially the variety of things you learn, for example, on Friday afternoons
- we were hugely impressed with how very well you are doing in English, mathematics and science
- the staff provide you with excellent opportunities in music, sports and the arts as well as the chance to learn Spanish, to enjoy activities after school and to go on trips
- your headteacher is exceptional – but I think you know that already!

There are not many schools in the country as good as yours – so you have lots to be immensely proud of! Congratulations to everyone at your school!

With every good wish to you all for the future

Frank Carruthers
(Lead inspector)