

# Earls Barton Junior School

Broad Street, Earls Barton, Northampton, NN6 0ND

## Inspection dates

24–25 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress in writing is not good enough.
- Not enough pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and some who receive additional support from the school have made enough progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching is not always good enough, especially in writing.
- Although work is marked regularly, comments made by teachers do not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Teachers with responsibility for subjects and for special educational needs have not done enough to make sure that different groups of pupils are making sufficient progress.
- The governing body has not been effective enough in making sure the headteacher and other leaders have improved teaching, especially in writing, quickly enough and that all pupils make good progress.
- Although pupils understand school rules and behave well in lessons, a small number do not behave well enough during some break and lunchtime sessions.
- A small but significant group of parents feel the school is not helping their children to make enough progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- Achievement in mathematics is good, and many pupils make expected progress in reading.
- Pupils are happy at school and they feel safe.
- The school provides a good range of activities, trips and residential visits that help to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and which give variety and enjoyment to their learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at their work and observed behaviour at the start of the day, during break time and at lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with: the headteacher; other members of staff; four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body; a representative of the local authority and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at: policies; the school's self-evaluation; planning documents; monitoring records related to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding; information about pupils' progress and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Consideration was given to the 49 responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and a school survey of 102 parents completed at the end of the spring term 2014.

## Inspection team

David Bray, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Balvinder Sarl	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- The school is of average size for its type.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and, of the small number from minority ethnic backgrounds, very few speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is below average. The proportion supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to improve progress in writing, especially for pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action, by:
  - ensuring that teachers plan the work of teaching assistants more effectively so they have higher expectations for what pupils can achieve, especially those whom they support because they have special educational needs
  - providing pupils with written feedback that gives clearer guidance on how they can improve their work
  - ensuring teachers have further training in how to improve writing, learn from good practice elsewhere and have higher expectations for what all pupils can achieve.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring subject leaders and the special educational needs leader have sufficient time and support to improve writing and reduce the gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils
  - developing a more positive relationship with the small, but significant, group of parents who currently do not feel that the school is providing a good standard of education
  - ensuring the governing body holds the headteacher to account more effectively and has higher expectations for the pace of improvement.
- Improve behaviour of a small number of pupils at lunchtime and break.
- An external review of governance and of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Too few pupils have made enough progress in writing from their above-average starting point at the end of Key Stage 1. The school checks pupils' writing skills once they have settled in Year 3 and has used an experienced, independent, assessor from another school to confirm these assessments. From this 'baseline' assessment, most pupils are making expected progress, but too few are doing better than this. Writing is improving, especially for younger pupils over the last two years. However, the rate of improvement has not been fast enough. This was confirmed by a review of written work across different year groups.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium have not made good enough progress across all year groups in literacy and numeracy. Progress for some of these pupils, especially younger ones, has started to improve so that the gap between how well they do compared to other pupils in the school is reducing. There are still too many who are not doing well enough, and their attainment in national tests was an average of one year behind others in mathematics and English in 2013.
- Most, but not all, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Some pupils supported by school action have made slower progress than other pupils, although this is starting to improve, especially for younger pupils. As a result of small-group work and well-planned activities, pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs are making more rapid progress.
- The most able pupils make expected progress in reading and mathematics. Too few make more rapid progress, especially in writing.
- Most pupils make expected progress in their reading. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and are confident in how to work out the sound of new words they encounter. The proportion making better progress was below average in 2013. The school's records show that progress in reading is improving and this was confirmed by observations, discussions and by listening to pupils read.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils attain levels that are above average in mathematics, and many are making good progress across the school.
- The results of the spelling, grammar and punctuation tests in 2013 were above the national average.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is not ensuring that some pupils make good enough progress in writing and that all pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs and are supported by school action are making rapid enough progress. The school has made these areas a priority, and younger pupils are starting to make better progress. Some older pupils have not caught up, although school data show that they have made better progress in the last two years. This was confirmed by a scrutiny of work.
- Some activities, especially in writing, are not ensuring that pupils are keen to learn and improve their work. Work is sometimes too easy or repeated without a clear reason. Pupils feel that lessons are sometimes dull and do not always capture their interest and enthusiasm. This is especially the case for older pupils.

- Marking is regular. It often provides positive comments about work but is not regularly helping pupils to improve their work and aspire to higher levels of achievement.
- The school has identified that improving writing is a priority. Teachers regularly provide pupils with examples of how to write effectively and ensure that writing is a strong feature across a range of subjects. This is leading to improvements, especially for younger pupils, but the teaching of writing is not capturing pupils' enthusiasm and interest sufficiently. Some teaching is not providing high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve, and this has led to some, such as those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, not always making sufficient progress.
- Teaching assistants often lead small-group activities for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Pupils with statements and those at school action plus often make expected progress in these sessions. Pupils at school action have not always made good enough progress because the work of the teaching assistants is not planned well enough and, as a result, they do not have high enough expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- Reading is taught effectively throughout the school and pupils make expected progress. Opportunities are provided for pupils to read a range of books and they develop confidence in sounding out new words. As a result, more pupils are starting to make better than expected progress.
- Lessons start promptly and pupils understand the school's expectations for behaviour. Most take pride in their work.
- Teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils work well with each other, study a range of faiths, consider what is right and wrong, and take part in musical, sporting and technological activities in lessons and outside of the classroom.
- The school provides a good range of displays that are planned to support learning.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

## requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because, although the large majority behave well at break and lunchtime, a few are not considerate enough to each other. Pupils spoken to feel that most behave well and they feel safe. They are aware that a few do not always behave well enough. One quarter of the parents who completed Parent View felt that behaviour was not good enough, although a similar, recent survey completed by the school was much more positive about behaviour.
- The school keeps clear records of behaviour which confirm that a small number of pupils are not always behaving well enough outside lessons. Actions to improve this behaviour have not been effective enough. The school promotes positive behaviour through a system of house points. The majority of staff who completed a questionnaire feel that behaviour is good. A small number feel that behaviour at lunch and break is not good enough.
- In lessons, pupils behave according to the rules and expectations of the school. They listen to instructions and settle quickly to carry out work. They understand established routines, and many complete tasks to the best of their ability. On occasion, they do not try as hard as they could.

- Pupils are happy to come to school. Attendance is above average and most parents say that they feel their children are happy at school. Pupils wear school uniform, are keen to take responsibility and understand the school's expectations for behaviour.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming as they move around the school. They have good manners, and relationships with staff are positive.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and parents agree that this is the case. Pupils are taught about how to stay safe, including when using the internet, and they understand how to deal with situations where they might be at risk.
- Bullying is rare but some does happen. Pupils understand what it means to be unkind to someone and they are aware of different kinds of bullying, including name-calling. They feel confident that the school would deal with this.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and staff have received appropriate training and know how to deal with any incidents if they arise.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership has ensured that improvements have been made, for example, in writing. Leaders have shown they have the capacity to improve the school and there are signs of improvements in teaching and better progress. Leadership has not been strong enough to ensure rapid and sustained progress for all groups of pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation of its effectiveness has identified the correct areas for improvement. The monitoring and evaluation of progress against this plan have not been strong enough. Leaders are aware of the need to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils and this has led to improvements. However, the pace of these changes has not been fast enough.
- Leaders with responsibilities for subjects are not using school data, the work in pupils' books and observations to evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils carefully enough. Actions have led to improvements but these have not been rapid and the school's literacy leader has not had sufficient time to carry out the role effectively.
- Leaders ensure equality of opportunity by providing access to all activities for all pupils. Leaders have not taken rigorous enough action to ensure that the gaps in achievement of different groups of pupils are closing at a fast enough rate. Opportunities are provided for pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium to access activities such as trips, but the school does not analyse carefully enough how well these groups are able to take advantage of and benefit from these opportunities.
- Systems to check on teachers' performance make links with how well pupils are making progress, and plans are in place to link this to pay progression. Training is being provided for teachers who require extra support. Greater support or challenge is needed to ensure that better progress is made by all pupils, especially in writing.
- The curriculum covers a range of subjects and provides sufficient time to develop literacy and numeracy skills. It is enriched by a good range of trips and residential visits. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The school has used primary sports funding to increase participation in physical activity and

sport and to promote healthy lifestyles and physical well-being for pupils.

- The school has tried to communicate with parents through a series of regular newsletters. A recent survey of 102 parents was positive in all areas. However, one quarter of parents who responded to Parent View would not recommend the school and feel their children are not making good progress. The school has not managed to establish a positive relationship with a small, but significant number, of parents.
- The local authority has carried out an accurate assessment of the school's progress and provided a good level of challenge. Support for writing has been brokered through a local school, and independent assessments of writing skills at the start of Year 3 have supported the school's baseline assessments. The support from the local school has not led to significant improvements in progress because school leaders have not acted quickly enough or with sufficient determination to ensure that they lead to rapid improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have a wide range of skills and experience. They have attended training and are making regular visits to the school. They have sought to focus on key areas that need improvement and have a broad understanding of how well the school is doing. Despite this, they have not been able to challenge school leaders effectively enough because they have lacked sufficient detail about the progress of different groups. They have also accepted too readily that the difference between attainment on entry, especially in writing, between Key Stage 1 results and the school's baseline assessments is sufficient justification for the lack of progress in writing
- Governing body minutes record outcomes of discussions and there is evidence of governors starting to hold the headteacher to account for improving standards. This challenge has been too imprecise to lead to rapid improvement
- Governors are aware of pupil premium funding but are not clear enough about its impact on the progress of the pupils for whom it is intended. Some funding is spent on activities that are not leading to them making better progress. Governors have a limited awareness of primary sports funding and its impact. In other areas, though, they ensure that the school's finances are properly managed
- Governors have developed a performance management policy and are starting to understand their role in holding staff to account.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121817
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	441881

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	288
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Dabrowski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Pinnock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 810371
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