

Easton Garford Endowed CofE School

New Road, Easton-on-the-Hill, Stamford, PE9 3NN

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make good progress so do not always reach the standards of which they are capable. In particular, the most-able pupils are often set work which is too easy.
- Teaching is not good enough to enable all pupils to make good progress, especially in writing. Teachers do not plan work that consistently builds on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects.
- Children in the Early Years do not make good progress. The outside area is not used as effectively as it should be and parents are not sufficiently involved in their child's learning.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve and teachers do not consistently ensure pupils act upon the advice given.
- The skills of subject leaders in analysing data and monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning are underdeveloped.
- Leaders and managers have not analysed data on pupils' achievements well enough to secure consistently good achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' cultural development is limited and this restricts the extent to which they are prepared for life in modern British society.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are proud of their school. They are respectful and feel safe in school because they know they are well cared for.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those eligible for support through the pupil premium make good progress.
- The Interim Executive Board (IEB) supports and challenges leaders well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, including one complete lesson, and talked to pupils about their progress and the work in their exercise books. Three visits to classrooms were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also looked at work in the Early Years and Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The inspector heard pupils in Key Stage1 read and observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes, lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, groups of pupils and with the chair and a member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The responses of 15 parents to Ofsted's online survey were taken into account, alongside comments made to the inspector by parents before and after school. The views of staff were also taken into account, as were seven completed staff questionnaire returns.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: external evaluations of the school's work, reports to the IEB by the local authority school improvement service and the school's independent consultants, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, the school's review of its own performance, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Easton Garford is a smaller than average primary school. In 2013 it changed from being a first school to a primary school. It has two classes. One caters for reception and Key Stage 1 children, and the other class contains Key Stage 2 pupils.
- The great majority of pupils are White British and live in the local village.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well below average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of children supported through a statement of special educational need or with an Education, Health and Care plan is below average.
- Action was taken by the Local Authority in February 2014 to put an Interim Executive Board (IEB) in place. There have been several changes in staff, including the headteacher and senior and middle leaders, since the previous inspection. The school is currently led by an acting interim headteacher. There was a complete change of teaching staff in January 2014.
- Through the auspices of the Local Authority, the school receives support from two other schools to develop the Early Years provision and the quality of writing. These are the "5 Wells Teaching Alliance" and Maidwell Primary School
- 2014 was the first year the school had Year 6 pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better across the school by ensuring teachers:
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects other than English
 - plan lesson tasks that take full account of each pupils' starting points
 - provide suitably demanding tasks, especially for the most able pupils
 - consistently give pupils detailed feedback about the strengths and weaknesses in their work and tell them how to improve
 - make sure that pupils have understood and act on the guidance they receive through marking.
- Improve the provision for pupils in the reception year by:
 - making more effective use of the outside area by improving the resources and activities used there
 - increasing parents' involvement in their children's learning.
- Strengthen leadership by ensuring:
 - subject leaders provide the headteacher and members of the Interim Executive Board with a clear overview of what is happening in their areas in order to drive improvements and evaluate the impact of teaching and new initiatives
 - data gathered about pupils' progress and attainment is used more effectively to evaluate and improve pupils' achievement over time.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about life in the culturally diverse society of the United Kingdom.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The interim acting headteacher and IEB have undertaken a comprehensive review of the school's effectiveness. In a very short time, they have restored staff morale and drawn the staff together as a team committed to improvement. However, improvements have not yet had enough time to raise achievement sufficiently. The headteacher has tackled inadequate teaching and made clear expectations about how it must improve. However, teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Data on pupils' progress had not been analysed well enough to get a clear picture of achievement across the school and identify where improvements need to be made. This has changed and is now identifying clearly where to target improvement.
- Middle leaders, including those responsible for the Early Years, are new to their roles in school and are not analysing data and checking the quality of teaching and pupils' learning sufficiently. The mathematics leader and the special educational needs leader, together with the interim acting headteacher, are now monitoring teachers' assessments more closely to ensure that these are accurate. Consequently, pupils who were in danger of slipping behind are identified more quickly and increasingly given the right level of support to make up gaps in their learning. This is not consistently true of other groups of pupils, however, particularly those who are more able.
- The school has identified areas where the curriculum needs to change to meet the new national requirements but has not yet implemented the new programmes of study. The curriculum covers all the necessary subjects but does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop and extend their writing skills in all the subjects they study.
- Pupils' cultural horizons are insufficiently well developed because opportunities for them to interact with people from backgrounds different from their own are limited. This restricts their understanding of modern British society. In contrast, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is well promoted and they are given regular opportunities for reflection in lessons or in assemblies.
- Leaders have rightly identified the need to improve the quality of teaching to make sure that pupils' achievement becomes consistently good across the school. The management of teachers' performance has been sharpened. Proposed targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement, and are linked to training and to teachers' salary progression. Although leaders recognise there is more to do, there have been some significant improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and the progress made by the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and this demonstrates that the school can improve further. The school has reviewed its systems for assessing pupils in the new national curriculum, but is yet to implement any changes.
- The school uses the primary school physical education and sport premium well to improve the quality and breadth of physical education and sports. Pupils' participation in physical education and sport has increased. The skills of staff have also been improved.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority and diocese have provided significant levels of support to the school, with two outstanding schools providing assistance in Early Years and writing.
- Parents who spoke with the inspector say they are well-informed, that the school is improving and behaviour is good. They feel that communication, particularly from the headteacher has improved significantly since his appointment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the new Interim Executive Board have worked tirelessly since being appointed to help the school improve further. Through their regular visits to school, they gain a good understanding of the quality of teaching and how well the pupils are learning. They ensure that only the best teaching is

rewarded though pay increases and that any underperformance is tackled. The members contribute well to identifying priorities for improvement and to making sure that plans to improve the school are effective.

- Members of the board have a good understanding of the overall picture on pupils' performance and what it tells them about how well the school is doing compared to others nationally. This means they are able to hold school leaders to account to improve the school further. The IEB oversees the school's budget well and members understand how extra funding, for example for disadvantaged pupils and school sports funding, is spent, and to what effect. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and members of the IEB carry out regular checks to make sure that pupils are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. This has a strong influence on pupils' improving achievement. School records show that behaviour is typically good in classes, around the school and over time.
- The atmosphere in lessons is good, with pupils listening intently, getting on well with each other during group and talking time, and showing keenness to work and improve.
- Pupils are caring, respectful, and polite and behave well, whether on the playground, in the corridor or in the dining room. Pupils are adamant that they feel safe and happy in school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and welcome the chances they have to take responsibility. Some are members of the Sports Crew who organise the sports activities during lunchtime, including devising the activity and encouraging other pupils to participate in the sporting challenges. Others have responsibility for looking after equipment. These roles help them to learn to act responsibly and develop leadership skills, which prepares them well for their future lives.
- The school has clear expectations of behaviour which all pupils willingly follow. Pupils say that occasionally a few pupils do not listen to adults straight away but, overall, they say behaviour is good. Parents' views are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school fully meets all safeguarding requirements.
- Pupils made it abundantly clear that there is no bullying or racism in their school and that they feel confident that staff will sort out any concerns that may arise. The school's records also confirm this. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including internet bullying and that based on prejudice.
- Pupils say, and their parents agree, that they feel safe and well-supported at school. They know how to keep themselves safe from everyday hazards, including e-safety and safety on the roads.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because, over time, it has not consistently helped pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not support or challenge the most-able pupils sufficiently. Over time the work provided for these pupils has been too easy or repetitive. The planning for these pupils, as with other groups, does not

take sufficient account of their starting points.

- The work in pupils' books is not always marked in a way that provides pupils with helpful advice to extend their learning further. Pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to respond to the advice they receive.
- There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum. In contrast, literacy is now taught well in formal English lessons but some pupils are still making up lost ground caused by poor teaching in the past.
- Cultural development is not promoted sufficiently across the school. Although teachers' good subject knowledge helps them ensure pupils have a wide range of experiences to strengthen pupils' spiritual, moral, social development, this is not matched in their provision for cultural development, and in this respect, at least, pupils are not sufficiently well-prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Questioning by the teachers is used well to test and extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils now have more demanding targets which are helping them to move on more rapidly than was previously the case.
- The skilled teaching assistants give good support to pupils who are disabled, have special educational needs or who are disadvantaged. This targeted support enables these pupils to make good progress.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2014, standards in the Year 6 tests were no better than average in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils made good progress.
- The most-able pupils throughout the school do not achieve as well as they could. Too few pupils gained the higher Level 5 in 2014.
- In 2013 and 2014, a large majority of pupils did not reach the expected standard in the Year 1 check on their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). This is because, with the constant staff changes, there was an inconsistent approach to the teaching of phonics and pupils did not have enough opportunities to use them to help improve their reading and writing skills.
- Significant staffing turbulence in the past, has led to underachievement. This is only now being tackled by the current leaders.
- In 2013 and in this school year, in the Year 2 national tests, standards were average for all pupils, including the disadvantaged pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics. High levels of staff changes disrupted the pace of pupils' learning and not enough pupils achieved as well as they could, particularly boys and the most-able pupils.
- Currently, all pupils, including the most able in Years 1 to 6, are making at least the expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics and some are making good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because of the effective additional support and guidance they are given by teachers and teaching assistants.
- There were no pupils in Year 6 eligible for support from the pupil premium in 2014 and very few across the school as a whole. Generally, these pupils make better progress than their classmates. Currently there is no gap and indeed the disadvantaged pupils achieve better than other pupils in the school.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The school was not able to provide reliable data to establish either the precise skills or abilities of children in different areas of learning as they enter the Reception year, or the rate of progress that they have made in the past. However, through a close scrutiny of children's work, a picture emerges which indicates that children enter the Reception year with the skills and abilities typically below those expected for their age, in language and understanding of the world.
- Most children make steady progress in the Reception class, but the most-able children do not make as much progress as they should. Approximately half of all children entered Year 1 with the skills and abilities typical for their age.
- The outdoor area is not supporting children's learning well enough. It is poorly resourced and the activities planned by teachers do not build on what children already know, understand and can do.
- Parents are not always clear about what their children do in Reception or how to help them to learn at home.
- After a period of instability, the leadership and management of the early years have improved. The leader is being supported in developing the outside environment to encourage the children to explore and follow their own initiatives. A full programme of training is in the process of being implemented for staff. Plans are in hand to involve parents further in supporting their children's learning at home, including the improvement of the learning journals.
- Teachers now have higher expectations of what children can achieve. More activities aimed at improving children's language and literacy skills are being employed, which are already proving successful in raising 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	122020
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449178

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Hilde McNeil
Interim Acting Headteacher	Scott Dainty
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2010
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