

Ecton Brook Primary School

Ecton Brook Road, Ecton Brook, Northampton, NN3 5DY

Inspection dates 7–8 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The joint headteachers and senior leaders are providing strong direction for the school and have driven improvements forward rapidly since the last inspection. Together, with governors, they have improved the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including their appreciation of British values, well.
- Pupils' well-being and safety are promoted extremely well. Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils are always safe and secure.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes it is excellent. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, their attendance is above average and they arrive punctually and well-prepared for lessons.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning and use probing questions to challenge their thinking.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work, especially in writing and mathematics, is good. As a result pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants provide good and sometimes outstanding support for pupils' learning.
- Pupils make good progress across the school. In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made outstanding progress and reached above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for secondary education.
- The early years provision is well led. Children are making good progress because teaching is good. Children's well-being and safety are promoted exceptionally well. As a result, they are happy, and extremely safe and secure at school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always ensure that pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well enough when working in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Leaders do not check how well teachers are promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons across the two sites the school occupies. They looked at the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and saw nearly all teachers teaching. Most of these observations were joint visits with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work taken from both sites in the school, including in the early years, and heard a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 read.
- They held meetings with the joint headteachers, the deputy headteacher, the early years leader, the inclusion manager, subject leaders, four members of the governing body, a representative of the board of the academy trust and a group of pupils from every class.
- The inspectors took account of parents' views. They considered 41 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire for parents), 312 responses to the school's most recent survey of parents and spoke to parents who accompanied their children to school. They also considered the 67 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation including: minutes of governing body meetings; the school's summary evaluation of its work; the school improvement plan; the recent review of the school by the academy trustees; safeguarding policies and procedures; attendance figures and records of behaviour; information about children's progress in the early years across both sites and information about pupils' progress throughout the school.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Karen Davies	Additional Inspector
Cassandra Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools and is increasing in size. It occupies two sites at a distance of one mile apart. One campus is at Ecton Brook Road and the other campus is located at the former Bellinge Primary School.
- Provision in the early years takes the form of three Reception classes, with all children attending full-time.
- The school is part of a multi-academy trust, which includes five other local primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than in most schools, as is the proportion learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- In 2014, the school met the governments' current floor standards for pupils in Year 6. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school works collaboratively with the five schools in the academy trust to share good practice.
- The school manages its own breakfast and after-school club.
- Since the last inspection, the previous headteacher has become the director of the academy trust. Two new joint headteachers were appointed in September 2014. All classes are now taught in single year groups.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring :
 - teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills as accurately in other subjects as they do in English and mathematics
 - Leaders check how well teachers are promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Both headteachers and senior leaders are providing inspirational leadership for the academy. They receive good support from other school leaders and governors in driving improvement forward. This is leading to a strong culture of effective teaching and good behaviour across the school. Leaders have successfully overseen a year-on-year rise in attendance from broadly average to above average since the last inspection.
- Staff morale is high, which is reflected in teachers' very positive responses in their questionnaire returns. All staff share the commitment of senior leaders and governors to improving the school. All issues identified at the last inspection have been carefully addressed so that teaching is now good and some is outstanding.
- Leaders enjoy the full confidence of parents. All those who talked to inspectors spoke highly of the school. This reflects the positive views of most parents in the school's recent survey and in Parent View.
- The leadership of teaching is excellent and has led to rapid improvements since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to require improvement. School leaders and governors visit classrooms regularly. They review the school's information about the progress pupils make each half term and look at pupils' books to judge the impact of teaching on learning over time. Action to improve teaching is focused sharply on supporting pupils' learning, and this has led to good teaching and good improvement in the quality of marking. The school evaluates pupils' achievement and the success of any actions it has taken carefully and uses these evaluations to set itself further priorities for improvement.
- The management of the performance of staff is good. Teachers' targets are focused on raising achievement and on making teaching outstanding. Leaders review these targets regularly with staff. As a result, pupils' progress over time and the quality of teaching are constantly improving.
- Subject leaders are developing their subjects well. They have implemented the new national curriculum carefully and comprehensively. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in English, mathematics, science and computing. The curriculum includes well-planned learning opportunities that are carefully organised around topics and themes that are designed to capture pupils' imagination and interest. Subject leaders have also developed the new systems of assessment in collaboration with other schools in the academy trust and are on their way to implementing them. However, leaders do not check how well pupils are using their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Leaders are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The curriculum covers themes which make pupils really think about their lives, such as the effects of climate change on the environment and the meaning of different religious symbols. Leaders ensure pupils' social development is strong by providing many opportunities for them to work together and care for one another. They have a keen sense of right from wrong and this underpins their good moral development. The school promotes pupils' cultural development strongly through sport, the arts, music and drama, as well through visits to different places of worship and the celebration of different world religious festivals. Pupils readily celebrate one another's differences and view each other as equals.
- Leaders are preparing pupils effectively for life in modern Britain by developing their understanding of British values. These are promoted very strongly through assemblies where, for example, pupils learn about parliamentary democracy and the need for respect and tolerance of others. They are equally well-promoted through the school's own values and through the work of the school council in raising funds for good causes. Class blogs and entries on social media also reflect the school's success in encouraging pupils to show tolerance and respect for the views of others.
- Leadership of the early years provision is good. Teaching in the setting is good and there are well-planned opportunities to ensure children make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result children's achievement is good.

- Leaders promote equality of opportunity effectively, which is seen in the good progress pupils make year on year from their different starting points. Leaders are committed to tackling any form of discrimination immediately after it occurs, and they ensure pupils develop positive relationships with one another; these, too, are reflected in the courtesy and respect pupils show to others. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying, racism or homophobia since the last inspection.
- The inclusion leader uses pupil premium funds exceptionally well to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils. This funding is helping eligible pupils to achieve at least as well as, and often better than, their classmates. Consequently the gaps between the attainment of eligible pupils and other pupils nationally are closing.
- Leaders have used the primary sports funding effectively to provide coaching in a range of sports such as football, cricket, tag rugby, dance and gymnastics. This has brought improvements in teachers' expertise in physical education and led to the school winning county sports events in competition with other schools. It is also used to provide a wide range of additional after-school clubs, which are well attended by disadvantaged pupils.
- The academy trustees provide strong support and challenge for leaders. They make frequent visits to the school and regularly review its work. They identify the schools' strengths and set clear targets for improvement.
- Leaders promote pupils' safety and well being most effectively by ensuring the school meets all statutory requirements. Very rigorous systems are in place to check the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children. The assessments of potential risks to pupils while at school or on school visits are very thorough. All staff are fully briefed about their safeguarding responsibilities and there is regular up-to-date training for staff and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have carried out a full audit of their skills and are using the outcomes well to provide good support and challenge for leaders. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching through their regular visits to the school, their consideration of the school's own monitoring data and through their examination of leader's reports on the quality of teaching.
 - Governors have established good arrangements for managing the performance of the joint headteachers. They ensure targets are securely linked to whole school improvement priorities for raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching. They also ensure that only good teaching is rewarded and that any underperformance is tackled effectively.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress. They hold the school to account for its spending and ensure that the additional funding for pupil premium and primary sports is used effectively to improve pupils' learning and well being.
 - Governors promote safeguarding exceptionally well. They rigorously check that the school grounds and premises are safe and secure and that any potential risks to pupils' safety are eliminated. They regularly review and update safeguarding policies and ensure all training is up-to-date.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good and sometimes it is outstanding, as seen for example in assemblies. Pupils respond well to the good management of their behaviour by staff, who provide excellent role models for good behaviour. Parents and pupils confirm that behaviour is usually good.
- Pupils' good attitudes are reflected in their above average attendance, their enthusiasm when participating in school activities and their good punctuality. Pupils take pride in their school uniform and in the neat and tidy way they present their written work. In lessons, they nearly always remain totally focused on their learning.
- Pupils maintain strong relationships with others. They show respect to each other and to adults by

listening carefully without interruption. They are courteous and polite to staff and visitors. Their positive relationships and good behaviour are having a strong impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils learn right from wrong, develop good social skills and respond well to the school's systems of rewards and sanctions. Their knowledge of the school's values helps them to appreciate the importance of showing kindness and consideration to others.
- Children in the early years are making good progress in learning to share and take turns. They are well-behaved and settle into their routines quickly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe at all times in school. Parents, staff and governors strongly agree that pupils are very safe. Pupils say that if they were worried about anything they would go to any member of staff for help and support.
- The school grounds and premises are very secure and the school maintains a high level of security through leaders' rigorous assessments of any potential risks. The school thoroughly checks the suitability of staff and visitors to work with children.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe, especially when using the internet and computers. They use school blogs very safely and always follow the school's guidelines on the using computers and the internet. They play safely in the playground and abide by the rules of fair play in competitive sports. They move very safely from one area of the school to another and there have been no unsafe incidents reported or recorded since the last inspection.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of the effects to health and well-being of smoking, drugs and alcohol. Parents are very appreciative of the high levels of care shown to pupils who attend the breakfast and after school clubs.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying in school and they are certain that staff would deal with it very effectively if it did occur. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying or harassment of any kind in recent years.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's information about the progress pupils are making in each year group, and inspectors' own observations in lessons, indicate that teaching is good. In Years 5 and 6, it is particularly strong in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' high expectations for pupils' learning and their use of probing questions to extend pupils' thinking are evident in all classes. For example, in one Year 6 mathematics lessons, the teacher used questioning to good effect to develop pupils' knowledge of the properties of quadrilaterals and to extend their reasoning skills in solving mathematical problems.
- The quality of teachers' marking, especially writing and in mathematics, has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In nearly all books seen, pupils were informed about how well they were doing and how to improve their work. They nearly always act on the guidance provided by teachers and show good gains in their knowledge, skills and levels of understanding.
- The school provides good support for different groups of pupils, including disadvantaged and disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English. Teaching assistants work closely with staff to provide at least good, and sometimes outstanding, support for pupils' learning. They develop pupils' understanding of technical vocabulary quickly, make good use of additional resources to develop understanding and break tasks down into smaller manageable steps; all of this helps these groups of pupils to make good progress.

- The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge of phonics (the process of linking letters and sounds to develop reading and spelling skills) well and make sure pupils know how to use these when reading unfamiliar words and in their writing. This is reflected in the very good achievement of pupils in Year 1 in the phonics screening checks since the last inspection. It is also reflected in the good and sometimes outstanding progress pupils make in writing and mathematics. However, occasionally teachers do not ensure pupils apply their literacy or numeracy skills in other subjects as well as they do in English and mathematics. This slightly limits their overall progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the early years with knowledge, skills and understanding which are typically much weaker in communication language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development than in other areas of learning. In 2014, the great majority of children reached a good level of development and made at least good progress relative to their starting points on entry to the Reception Year.
- More pupils in Year 1 than in most schools reached the nationally expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013 and in 2014. All pupils currently in Year 1 are making at least good and sometimes outstanding progress in using letter sounds for reading and spelling. Once again, they are well placed to exceed the nationally expected standard this year.
- Attainment in 2014 at the end of Year 2 was broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results rose slightly from 2013, although pupils did not do quite as well in reading as they did in writing. The school's accurate information on the performance of current pupils suggests that they, too, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are on course to reach at least average standards, with more pupils reaching the higher level 3 in each of these subjects, than in 2014.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils made outstanding progress from their starting points to exceed national average standards overall. They did particularly well in English, especially in grammar, punctuation and spelling and in writing. However, they did not make as much progress in reading as they did in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in other year groups in writing and mathematics was good rather than outstanding.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are making outstanding progress from their different starting points at the end of Year 2 and are on course to reach above-average standards in reading writing and mathematics once more. All the different groups of pupils are making at least good progress from their various starting points and are well prepared for secondary education.
- The most-able pupils generally make good progress from their higher starting points. Although in 2014, fewer pupils attained the higher level 3 than other pupils nationally in Year 2, there were few really able pupils in that year group. Nearly all pupils in Year 6 who were entered for the level 6 tests in 2014 were successful. A high proportion of the most-able pupils currently in the school are on course to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making consistently good and sometimes better progress across the school. This is because teaching assistants provide good support for their learning.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those at an early stage of learning English throughout the school are making at least good progress from their different starting points.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was one term ahead of other pupils nationally in mathematics and almost in line with their classmates. Their attainment in reading was approximately one term behind other pupils nationally and three terms behind that of their classmates. Their attainment in writing was approximately two terms ahead of other pupils nationally and one term behind their classmates.

- Disadvantaged pupils made outstanding progress relative to their starting points in writing and mathematics in 2014 and their rates of progress compared favourably with national figures for expected and above expected progress. They made good progress in reading relative to their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are making at least good progress across all year groups with some making very rapid gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. Consequently, any remaining gaps between their attainment, and that of their classmates and pupils nationally, are closing rapidly.
- Pupils who arrive at the school other than at the usual times make good progress from their different starting points. This is due to the good support teachers arrange for these late arrivals, which ensures they catch up with their classmates quickly.
- Pupils are making at least good progress, and sometimes outstanding progress, in physical education as a result of good use of primary sports funding. For example a few pupils are attending premier football league academies and the school has won county championships in a number of competitive events.
- Pupils' progress is good in other subjects, such as computing, drama, music, and art and design. A few pupils are also making outstanding progress in these subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership of the early years provision has ensured that teaching and achievement have improved over time. The good training arranged for teachers has ensured that they provide good support for children's learning at all times.
- Leaders check that the school's robust procedures to ensure the safety and well-being of children are rigorously implemented and that, consequently, children are kept safe at all times.
- The behaviour of children, across both sites, is good. Links with parents have been strengthened and are now also good. Staff provide training for parents in how to support their children's learning and behaviour and parents periodically visit the classrooms to work with their children. As a result, children settle quickly into the school, behave well and feel happy and thrive.
- Teaching is good across both sites. Teachers and teaching assistants have an accurate view of children's knowledge, skills and understanding when they join the school. They use the information about children's prior attainment to devise varied and interesting activities that extend their learning and ensure they make good progress. For example, during the inspection, children were using money to find out 'one more' and 'one less' than a given amount. Another group of children were exploring the indoor and outdoor areas and using 'tricky' words to describe what they found. Others were working on letter sounds with a teaching assistant or creating imaginative pictures of monsters using a variety of different paints and textures.
- The setting's learning journals show that children are making good progress in all areas of learning from their different starting points. They progress well, especially in the development of their communication, language, literacy and numeracy skills, and in their self confidence. As a result, children are well prepared for entry into Year 1, with the majority reaching a good level of development by the time they do so.

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	138953
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	461991

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	555
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Narinder Chaggar
Headteacher	Debbie Archer and Neil Woods (joint headteachers)
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2013
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