

Earls Barton Junior School

Broad Street, Earls Barton, Northampton NN6 0ND

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Senior leaders have not successfully addressed all the issues raised at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and outcomes has not improved sufficiently to secure a good quality of education for all pupils.
- Safeguarding is not effective because senior leaders have not always made referrals in a timely manner.
- Senior leaders have an overgenerous view of the work of the school. Their evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement focuses too closely on the strengths they can find.
- Senior leaders' plans for improvement lack detail. They do not address all aspects of school life. The plans do not contain sufficient detail for governors to be able to hold leaders to account for the impact of the work they do.
- Senior leaders failed to undertake the review of pupil premium spending that was recommended at the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have not tracked the progress that pupils make closely. Although there have been improvements in the amount of progress pupils make over time, this has not been rapid enough.
- Middle leaders undertake some monitoring, but acknowledge that there is scope for them to have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and outcomes.
- In some lessons, teachers' questions are not precise enough for them to be certain about what pupils know and understand.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not routinely intervene quickly enough when pupils are ready to move on with their learning. As a result, progress slows.
- Pupils' mathematics books are sometimes untidy. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the mathematical skills they have learned through problem-solving and reasoning.
- Not all teachers consistently adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Until recently, governors have not successfully held leaders to account for the work that they do.
- Several parents expressed dissatisfaction about the quality of leadership and how well leaders communicate with them.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils are polite and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils say that they enjoy school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school.
- In 2016, attainment for pupils at the end of Year 6 was at least in line with, and in some subjects above, national averages.

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - reviewing the procedures for ensuring that potential safeguarding concerns are referred to relevant agencies
 - ensuring that school policies are carefully checked for accuracy when they are reviewed
 - devising a plan for improvement which covers all aspects of the work of the school, ensuring that it is sufficiently precise so that governors can comprehensively hold leaders at all levels to account for the impact of the work they do
 - ensuring that senior leaders provide the necessary information for governors to be able to hold them to account with rigour
 - ensuring that the additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils is effectively used, so that pupils who are entitled to it narrow the achievement gap with their peers and make the progress of which they are capable from their starting points
 - making effective use of assessment information to hold teachers to account for the progress that all pupils make from their starting points
 - further improving the skills of middle leaders, including those with responsibility for subjects and for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that they can improve the quality of teaching, provision and outcomes in the areas of responsibility
 - improving communication with parents.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers and teaching assistants have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve, and intervene without delay when pupils are ready to move on to more difficult work
 - teachers provide sufficiently challenging work for the most able pupils so that they can achieve the high standards of which they are capable
 - teachers use precise questioning skills to check pupils' understanding, so that they are able to adapt their teaching and match the work they provide closely to the ability of the pupils
 - teachers insist on high standards of presentation in mathematics to avoid errors
 - teachers effectively develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
 - teachers follow the school's policies in full
 - the best practices seen in several classes across the school are consistently implemented by all teachers and teaching assistants.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have not acted swiftly or decisively enough to bring about the necessary improvements to the quality of education for this to be judged a good school.
- Senior leaders' evaluation of the work of the school is too generous. They have not identified all the areas that need to be developed closely enough in order to plan for the necessary improvements to be made. The improvement plan lacks detail and does not cover all aspects of school life. As a result, governors are unable to hold leaders to account for the work they do and leaders are unable to check that progress is being made.
- A review of the pupil premium spending was recommended at the previous inspection. Senior leaders have failed to make sure that this was undertaken. Consequently, they are unable to fully account for how well the funding is being spent or whether it is having a positive impact on the outcomes for the pupils who are entitled to it.
- Senior leaders do not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils, particularly those who are the most able. Senior leaders have not developed a system to measure pupils' progress from their different starting points. Instead, they have focused their attention on ensuring that pupils meet the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, some pupils, particularly those who are most able, have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- Several parents used Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, to express dissatisfaction about communication and the quality of leadership. Only just over half of the parents felt that the school was well led and managed and just over one quarter would not recommend the school to other parents. However, a large majority of parents said that their children are happy at the school.
- Senior leaders undertake the performance management of staff. Leaders set targets for teachers which reflect the school's current priorities.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils' learning is enhanced by trips and visitors. Subject leaders carry out some monitoring work so that they understand the strengths and areas they would like to improve in their subjects. They are keen to be able to analyse their findings more closely to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in their areas of responsibility.
- The leader with responsibility for pupils who have special additional needs and/or disabilities has worked closely with external agencies. She has reviewed the provision for pupils over this year. She acknowledges that there is scope to analyse more closely the impact of the provision to check that pupils are making the best progress.
- The local authority has worked closely with senior leaders. It has offered support in brokering a national leader of governance to the board of governors and in supporting senior leaders to monitor the work of the school. The local authority has provided a high level of support and challenge to school leaders because it has had concerns about the rate of improvements being made.
- Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of British values. Pupils vote for their classmates to represent them on the junior leadership team. Pupils demonstrate an understanding of the rule of law through understanding their school rules.
- Leaders have ensured that the additional government funding for primary school physical education and sport has been used well. Teachers have benefited from additional training in order to improve their teaching in this subject. Pupils have access to a range of sporting opportunities, such as clubs before and after school, including volleyball and cricket. Pupils say that they are encouraged to bring fruit to eat during breaktime and that teachers help them to understand about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils learn to play a variety of musical instruments and participate in performances for their families to attend. Pupils learn about cultures and religions that are different from their own. Displays around school show that pupils learn about their local heritage and develop a sense of place through learning about the history of Northamptonshire and their local church in Earls Barton. During assembly, pupils respectfully reflected upon the moral of the story and were very excited about their recent success of raising over £800 for charity.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has been through a time of change over recent months. Several members of the governing body have left. Four experienced governors from the neighbouring Earls Barton Infant

School have been co-opted onto the board of governors at Earls Barton Junior School to join with the remaining experienced governors. The local authority has brokered support from an experienced national leader of governance, who has recently taken up post as the chair of the governing body.

- Governors have not systematically provided the right balance of challenge and support to school leaders since the previous inspection. Insufficient rigour has led to policies being ratified without thorough review, for example. More recently, governors have begun to check the work of the school for themselves more closely.
- Although it is still early days for the newly formed governing body, the governors who met with the inspector had an accurate view of the strengths and areas that need improvement in the school. They acknowledge that there is a great deal of work to be done, but they are clear about the actions that need to be undertaken to bring about the improvements that are required.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. At the start of the inspection, there were some inconsistencies in the safeguarding policies, for example in the versions of the government documents that were being referenced. This was remedied by the second day of the inspection, but it showed that the review of the policy was not undertaken thoroughly enough. Leaders have not always referred potential issues to the relevant external agencies in a timely manner. For this reason, safeguarding is not effective. In other respects, the appropriate checks are carried out when new staff join Earls Barton Junior School. Leaders ensure that staff receive appropriate training so that they know the signs of potential abuse to look for and how to raise a concern. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, for example when they are using the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teachers do not use questioning skills precisely enough to check pupils' understanding. Occasionally, teachers accept answers that are unclear without probing more deeply to find out whether pupils have fully grasped the ideas that are being taught. As a result, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to broaden pupils' knowledge and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Teachers do not ensure that the tasks they provide are well matched to all pupils' abilities, particularly those who are the most able. Sometimes, the most able pupils mark time while longer explanations are given to other pupils. The most able pupils sometimes complete work that is easy for them before beginning more appropriately challenging work because their teachers and teaching assistants do not intervene to move them on quickly enough. This hampers the progress these pupils make.
- Mathematics books show that some teachers do not consistently insist that pupils' work is well presented. Teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills well enough in mathematics.
- Pupils' books show that teachers usually adhere to the school's marking and feedback policy. However, this is not consistently the case. Occasionally, pupils do not receive the information they need to improve their work.
- Teachers make effective use of homework. Vibrant displays around the school showcase the work pupils have completed at home, for example as part of their project about Ancient Egypt.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to make close links across subjects so that learning makes sense for pupils. For example, in one lesson, a pupil mentioned 'amphibious' creatures and the teacher related this to work the pupils had completed during science lessons.
- Teachers set targets for pupils to achieve when they are writing. Pupils understand their targets and refer to them as they write to help them improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants make effective use of praise to encourage pupils to have a go in class. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. There is a culture of respect as pupils laugh along with their teachers and teaching assistants as they gently enable pupils to work things out for themselves.
- Learning is most effective when teachers provide the correct level of challenge for the pupils. During the inspection, the most able pupils in Year 6 were completing a challenging reasoning task in mathematics. They relished the opportunity to hold a lively debate about the aspects of mathematics they could employ to solve the task they had been set.
- Books show that teachers expect the same standards of writing when pupils write across a range of subjects as they do during English lessons.
- Pupils read widely and daily in school. Pupils read with accuracy. They enjoy the range of books on offer

and the 'book talk' sessions in class. By the time they leave school, pupils have developed positive attitudes towards reading and can identify significant authors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils across the school demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. One pupil summed up the views of many by saying, 'I enjoy learning.'
- Pupils say that their teachers help them to understand how to keep safe, for example when they are using modern technology. They learn how to cycle safely on the roads through the 'Bikeability' scheme.
- The junior leadership team nominated two charities that they have successfully raised funds for this year. Pupils have also raised money for a 'buddies' bench' to be installed on the playground. Pupils say that playground buddies 'make sure everybody is included'.
- Teachers have implemented clear routines for pupils to follow in class. Pupils respond well to the expectations teachers have set. Pupils are almost always engaged in the tasks that teachers have set, only becoming inattentive when the work becomes insufficiently challenging for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite to adults and visitors around school. They listen sensibly to each other and cooperate well with their peers in class.
- Pupils behave well around school. Pupils say that behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. They believe it is good and that bullying is rare. They are confident that if any bullying did occur, a trusted adult would help them.
- At breaktime, pupils play sensibly together, using the equipment provided or simply walking and talking together. They say that playtime is safe and they enjoy the chance to relax with their friends. As breaktime ends, pupils return to their lessons promptly.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average, indicating that pupils enjoy coming to school.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Senior leaders have not had sufficiently high expectations of pupils, particularly those who are the most able. Leaders have focused their attention on ensuring that pupils meet the expected level of attainment for their age, rather than the amount of progress they make from their starting points in Year 3. Senior leaders were not able to provide reliable assessment information to demonstrate the progress pupils have made this year. Senior leaders have not tracked closely enough the progress that pupils make across the school from their starting points. Some pupils, particularly those who are most able, have not made the progress of which they are capable.
- By the end of 2015, the proportions of disadvantaged pupils making, or exceeding, expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics were lower than that of their peers. The gap in achievement is not narrowing quickly enough, although there was an improvement in progress from the previous year.
- The proportion of pupils making, or exceeding, expected progress by the end of Year 6 has improved in all subjects since the previous inspection. By the end of 2015, the proportion of pupils making, and exceeding, expected progress in reading was above the national average. However, the proportion making, and exceeding, expected progress in writing was lower than seen nationally. The proportion making expected progress in mathematics fell short of the national average in 2015, while the proportion exceeding expected progress in mathematics was higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 6 in the summer of 2016 who attained the new expected standard in writing was in line with the national average and above the national average for reading, mathematics and spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 6 in spelling, punctuation and grammar has exceeded the national average for three years.

School details

Unique reference number	121817
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10011746

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Harris-Bridge
Headteacher	Ian Pinnock
Telephone number	01604 810371
Website	www.ebjs.co.uk
Email address	schooloffice@ebjs.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 June 2014

Information about this school

- Earls Barton Junior School is an average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is lower than average. This is additional government funding to support disadvantaged pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- Almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 22 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the coordinator with responsibility for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and three other middle leaders.
- Inspectors met with three representatives of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning and considered the views of 92 parents through the online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the online staff or pupils' surveys.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils, listened to four pupils read and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' books from all classes.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan and a range of documents relating to the progress and attainment of pupils.
- The inspector considered the information available to parents on the school's website.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector
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