

Eastfield Infant and Nursery School

Pig Lane, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5QT

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards at the end of key stage 1 are not good enough. Pupils do not make sufficient progress. Too few pupils reach the expected level by the time they leave the school.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Where teaching is weaker, pupils become distracted and make less progress as a result.
- The school's curriculum is underdeveloped. The work that pupils are given to do is not sufficiently exciting and engaging.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make the rapid progress necessary to enable them to catch up with their peers.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a deep and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has taken prompt and decisive action to tackle the most important weaknesses and, as a result, the school is now clearly improving.
- The quality of teaching is improving steadily as a result of the close monitoring and appropriate action taken by senior leaders to address the weaknesses identified.
- Governors know the school well and now have a more realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. They are increasingly effective in holding the school's leaders to account.
- Safeguarding is effective. Robust measures are in place to ensure that only suitable people are employed to work with pupils. Prompt and decisive action is taken, where necessary, in response to child protection concerns.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They follow the rules and behave well. Pupils feel safe at school. They say that bullying hardly ever happens and, when it does, staff sort it out quickly.
- The early years provision gives children a good start to their school careers. They quickly learn to be confident and interested learners.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school and attainment is similar to the national average at the end of Year 2 by:
 - sharing the best practice that already exists with colleagues whose practice is less well developed
 - ensuring that teachers focus on what they want pupils to learn, rather than what they want them to do, when planning learning
 - ensuring that all teaching staff have high expectations of what pupils can do
 - improving the effectiveness of phonics teaching, specifically by ensuring that all teaching staff have sufficient subject knowledge to teach phonics well
 - ensuring that staff focus on developing the practical aspects of pupils' writing, such as spelling and punctuation, as well as the creative elements.
- Develop and improve the school's curriculum so that it provides greater and more exciting opportunities for pupils to make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- Ensure that the effectiveness of pupil premium grant spending is maximised, so that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils make the rapid progress necessary to enable them to attain standards at least in line with the national average.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher very quickly established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses when she joined the school at the beginning of the academic year. She realised that the school had a number of weaknesses and took prompt action to start to address them.
- The headteacher chose her priorities carefully and sensibly focused first on improving the quality of teaching in the school. She has not been afraid to make unpopular decisions, nor has she shied away from having difficult conversations with staff, in the best interests of pupils. As a result, it is clear that, from a low starting point, the school is now improving once again.
- The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the school's other leaders. Through the course of the last academic year, leaders have developed their leadership skills and gained a more accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher provides less-experienced leaders with training sessions to develop specific leadership skills. For example, leaders now feel more confident in having difficult conversations with people because of the training they have received.
- The quality of teaching is now monitored much more closely and effectively. A wide range of monitoring activities are carried out, including lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' exercise books and checking how well lessons are planned. The headteacher has ensured that these activities are now 'joined up'. For example, the areas for development noted during one observation now form the focus for the next observation. This means that there is a continual focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- The vast majority of parents are happy with the school. Of the parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, nine out of ten said that they would recommend the school to others. Many parents chose to leave additional written comments, most of which were positive. For example, one parent said, 'I would like to say how impressed I have been with my child's education this year. He has been very happy at school and made huge progress with his learning.'
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is led and managed very well. The special educational needs coordinator is experienced and highly knowledgeable. Leaders have ensured that the additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively, so that this group of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The pupil premium grant is effective in ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers in school. It is not yet used well enough to ensure that pupils make the rapid progress necessary to enable them to catch up with the attainment of their peers. The funding is spent in a variety of ways, such as to provide individual tuition for pupils and to purchase specific resources. The headteacher monitors the progress of this group of pupils closely and outcomes are improving.
- The sport premium is spent effectively. Most of the funding is used to provide specialist

sports coaching. This has benefited the school both in terms of the coaches' direct work with pupils and the professional development opportunities that their work has provided for members of staff. The funding has enabled the school to provide pupils with a wider range of opportunities, such as street dance and yoga.

- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern British society. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, pupils show good attitudes and are accepting of other people's differences.
- The curriculum has improved during this academic year and is gradually becoming more interesting and exciting. For example, pupils in Year 2 constructed their own buildings and created the streets of London on the school playground. Under carefully controlled conditions, a fire was started in the school's own Pudding Lane, bringing to life 'the great fire of London'.
- Although events such as this have had a demonstrable impact on the quality of pupils' writing, they are the exception rather than the rule. Senior leaders are fully aware that the curriculum needs development in order to ensure that it has a more direct impact on improving both the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

Governance of the school

- Until the current academic year, governors had an inaccurately positive view of the school. They checked the quality of the school's provision by taking note of the advice provided by external advisers. This gave them an unrealistically high impression of both the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.
- The governing body is becoming increasingly effective. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors now ask questions more frequently during meetings. The questions that they ask are better focused on checking the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management.
- Governors now check to ensure that the pupil premium grant is spent effectively on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This monitoring is much more effective than it has been in the past. They now receive regular and appropriate information from the headteacher to enable them to check that the funding is spent well.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's single central record meets statutory requirements. Systems for ensuring that only suitable people are employed to work with children are robust. For example, the school keeps good records of confirmation that checks have been done on supply teachers by the employing agency before they are allowed to work in the school.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training. The single central record is used well as a means of tracking when staff last received training and ensuring that no members of staff are missed out.
- Since coming into post, the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has carried out an audit of the school's child protection files. Every individual file has been checked to ensure that appropriate action has been taken to address concerns that

have been reported. Every file for every pupil for whom concerns have been reported now has an up-to-date chronology, showing clearly what happened, when and who was involved.

- The headteacher has received appropriate training to enable her to fulfil her role as the school's designated safeguarding lead. The deputy headteacher has received similar training, enabling her to deputise for and support the headteacher in this role.
- The headteacher has a very good understanding of the role of designated safeguarding lead. She knows when and how to take action when it is necessary. Child protection files provide clear evidence that the designated safeguarding leads take appropriate action, in a timely fashion, when it is needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching had deteriorated. As a result, outcomes fell dramatically in 2016 so that pupils' attainment was below the national average, having been well above it for a number of years. Although the national approach to assessment changed between 2015 and 2016, so data is not directly comparable, the change in the school's relationship to the national average is very clear.
- The quality of teaching varies between classes and year groups. Where it is weaker, pupils lose concentration, because they are not sufficiently well engaged by what they are doing. Where this is the case, pupils become fidgety and distracted, requiring frequent prompts from staff to ensure that they remain on task.
- Some teachers do not focus sufficiently on what they want pupils to learn, rather than what they want them to do, when they are planning lessons. Some teachers' use of questioning, both to assess pupils' knowledge and to encourage them to think more deeply, is limited.
- Weaknesses in phonics teaching, in some classes, affect how well pupils pick up these essential skills. Some teachers have weak subject knowledge in this area and this prevents them from teaching phonics effectively. For example, teachers and other staff introduce unnecessary misconceptions by using incorrect sounds to spell more-complicated phonemes.
- Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. For example, basic skills in pupils' writing, such as spelling errors and missing full stops, are not picked up on and addressed.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the beginning of the academic year. As a result of regular and effective monitoring, staff training and clear leadership, teaching is now more effective and outcomes are starting to rise.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They use a range of positive strategies to ensure that pupils try hard and behave well. Relationships between adults and pupils are consistently strong throughout the school.
- Teachers are increasingly effective in providing opportunities for pupils to write at length and in a range of different subjects. Pupils are given interesting things to write about and this is encouraging them to write more.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff are very good role models. At all times, staff throughout the school, not just in classrooms, show pupils how to behave with politeness, respect and good manners. Pupils follow the lead they are given and are consistently polite and well-mannered.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They know that staff look after them well and will always give them help when they need it. Pupils know to tell an adult if they are worried about anything and they have faith that the adults in school are able to sort things out quickly. As a result, pupils are confident and self-assured.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, at a level appropriate to their age. Pupils say that it is rare that someone is 'nasty on purpose' because 'they know they'll get told off'. Pupils know that their teachers will listen to them and that they can speak to the headteacher if they are really worried.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe in a range of ways, such as when crossing the road or using the internet. Many pupils do not like the regular fire drills, because the alarm 'makes you jump', but pupils understand why the drills are necessary and important.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move about the school. Even when teaching is weaker and pupils become distracted, they do not disturb the learning of others.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they enjoy their learning. The good relationships between adults and pupils mean that the atmosphere in classrooms is positive and encouraging. Pupils are confident and were keen to speak to inspectors about their work and their school.
- Pupils attend school regularly and on time. The school's overall rate of attendance is similar to the national average. Very few pupils are persistently absent and no groups of pupils are affected by low attendance.
- The school takes effective action to address any concerns with pupils' attendance. A range of suitable actions are in place to both encourage and insist upon good attendance. The school works with the local authority's education welfare officer to ensure that a tight rein is kept on both attendance and punctuality.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes of the 2016 national assessments were weak. Pupils' attainment was below the national average in reading and mathematics, and well below average in writing. This demonstrated a notable fall in standards. Under the previous national approach to assessment, pupils' attainment was well above the national average for several years.

- Similarly, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in the 2016 national assessments was disappointing. The proportion was broadly similar in reading, below average in writing and well below the national average in mathematics.
- Outcomes in phonics have been weak over time. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average for the three years to 2016. Outcomes improved this year and the proportion who reached the expected level was above the national average.
- Pupils make progress in a range of other curriculum subjects, some more rapidly than others. Pupils benefit from having access to a pool at the school next door and swimming is a strength as a result. Many Year 1 pupils are already able to swim a width of the pool.
- The school's current assessment information shows that pupils are starting to make better progress, although this is not yet consistent across subjects and classes. Pupils' attainment in the 2017 national assessments, although improved, remains below average as a result of the weak teaching that pupils have received over time.
- The current most-able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are making similar progress to other groups of pupils. Where teaching is stronger, pupils are given work that challenges and excites them. When this is the case, pupils make better progress.
- Current disadvantaged pupils are making similar progress to other pupils in the school. Teachers now have a much clearer understanding of who the disadvantaged pupils are in their classes. They are now held to account for the progress of these pupils in a way that they were not in the past. Although additional funding is spent well enough to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers, it is not spent sufficiently well to promote rapid progress in order to diminish the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils.
- Current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making similar progress to other groups from their individual starting points. The small number of pupils are monitored closely by the special educational needs coordinator and their progress is tracked carefully. The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is now being spent more effectively.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is managed well. Following a very tragic event early in the academic year, leaders and staff have pulled together very well to continue leading the provision effectively. As a result, improvements have continued throughout the year.
- Many children join the school with skills and abilities below those typical of their age. Children make good progress during their time in early years. The proportion who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception has risen in recent years and is now above the national average. As a result, children are now well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- Children behave well and learn the school's rules quickly. They move around the classrooms and outdoor area sensibly and safely. Children persevere with the activities they choose to do for extended periods of time. They show resilience and keep on

trying when things do not go the way they want them to straight away.

- Children use their phonics knowledge to help them to write. For example, one child wrote independently, 'The crocdiol is not a lowt on mi bot', providing an easily-read approximation of 'The crocodile is not allowed on my boat.'
- Leaders and the early years team have worked hard to improve the quality of assessment in both Nursery and Reception. Children's 'learning journals' are now both an attractive record of each child's learning and an accurate picture of the progress they have made throughout the year.
- Parents are involved appropriately in their children's learning. Parents contribute to the initial assessments that the school makes about each child. They are then encouraged to continue to be involved throughout the year. Parents spoke positively to inspectors about the improvements to learning journals that have taken place this year.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used increasingly well. All disadvantaged children made at least the expected amount of progress during this academic year.

School details

Unique reference number	110707
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031407

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	William Scantlebury
Headteacher	Lisa Valla
Telephone number	01480 463958
Website	www.eastfieldschool.co.uk
Email address	office@eastfield.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2007

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There have been several changes of headteacher since the previous inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2016.
- The previous early years leader died, suddenly and unexpectedly, in December 2016. The school has appointed an early years leader to the substantive post from September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching and learning over time. Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons, some jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, a representative of the local authority, a group of pupils and a group of governors.
- Inspectors looked closely at the work in pupils' exercise books, listened to them read and talked to them about their work.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on the playground as they brought their children to school. The lead inspector spoke with one parent on the telephone. The views of the 79 parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were taken into account. Inspectors also took account of 68 written responses.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's assessment information, records of leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the school, and a range of other documents.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Chris Lake	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Tims	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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