

Earls Barton Primary School

Broad Street, Earls Barton, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN6 0ND

Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have managed the merger of the former infant and junior schools well. The two former school communities have come together and there is a clear sense of continued improvement.
- Leaders are ensuring that teaching is at least good overall in all key stages. They are providing good support so that staff improve further.
- Teachers plan a curriculum that is both interesting and balanced. As a result, pupils want to come to school to learn. Attendance is above the national average.
- Staff are skilled at clarifying the misconceptions that pupils have. This helps pupils to understand what they are learning.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are eager to learn, make good progress and are ready for Year 1 by the time they leave.
- Pupils' workbooks show that pupils are currently making good overall progress across key stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils attain well. Their skills, knowledge and understanding are at least in line with, and often above, those found typically in other children of the same age.
- Teachers are extremely effective at kindling in pupils a deep and genuine love of books. Pupils become not only confident readers but also young people who read with great enthusiasm and pleasure.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils work hard and listen carefully in class. They are consistently polite and well behaved around the school.
- Although the work that teachers give to pupils is appropriate for their age, they do not give the most able pupils work that challenges them enough. Inspectors saw too many examples of very able pupils completing tasks that were insufficiently demanding for them.
- Some parents, carers and staff do not feel that leaders communicate well enough. They believe that leaders do not consider their opinions sufficiently or do not consistently explain clearly why leaders have made the decisions they have.
- Subject leaders, other than in English and mathematics, do not monitor how much progress the pupils make. As a result, they cannot inform the governing body what needs to happen so that pupils make even faster gains.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers consistently give the most able pupils work in all subjects that challenges them fully, so that they can make the rapid progress they should.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' communication is both timely and of a high quality, so that a very large majority of parents and staff feel that their views are taken into account, and they understand why leaders are making the decisions they are
 - all middle leaders are given time to check on the progress of pupils in the subject for which they are responsible, and to report to the governing body on their findings.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Over the past year, senior leaders have rightly made their greatest priority the process of an amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, and the admission of pupils and staff from key stage 2.
- Leaders have brought staff, pupils and parents from the two communities together with a review of the school's aims and values, and the design of a new school badge. Leaders have also ensured that they have reviewed a large number of policies and expectations, such as the school's behaviour policy, to ensure that pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the many strengths of the school, as well as the things that need to be further improved. They are ensuring that they particularly give those members of staff who are new, or who have worked under the leadership of the former junior school, effective support and professional development.
- Senior leaders are making it clear that they expect all teachers to ensure that their pupils make good progress. Teachers' performance management targets are linked clearly to the gains their pupils need to make during the year, rather than simply pupils' attainment. This is driving up further the quality of teaching because teachers are held to account for the impact of their work.
- The inclusion leader works tirelessly, and highly effectively, to support many families. She ensures that she points parents to information about adult learning or gives them very useful advice on how to, for example, manage their child's behaviour.
- The curriculum is both well balanced and engaging. For example, pupils in Year 5 learn about Canada through their 'Moose, Mountain and the Maple Leaf' topic, while Years 1 and 2 find out about how journeys have changed over time when they study 'Planes, Trains and Automobiles'. Pupils said that they enjoy the many after-school clubs that allow them to develop their skills, such as the school choir and dance aerobics.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about a wide variety of religions and cultures, and are respectful of them and of other people. They understand the importance of following the school rules. Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in the school and local community. For instance, the junior leadership team is producing designs and ideas to improve the local skate park.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are given regular time to reflect in assemblies, as well as at important national events such as Remembrance Day. Pupils are keen to raise money for charities such as the Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Research. They willingly take on responsibility for aspects such as the school library, and the oldest pupils eagerly read stories to children in Reception.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium well in ways that ensure that the progress of disadvantaged pupils accelerates. Staff adjust their support depending on the needs of individual pupils. For example, some pupils receive speech and language therapy, which helps them improve both their communication and their confidence.

- The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities checks rigorously that the provision for these pupils is of a high quality. Her excellent records of support mean that she can monitor their progress closely. She ensures that the additional funding these pupils receive helps them to make good progress from their starting points, and that they do not mark time in their learning.
- Leaders spend the primary physical education and sport funding effectively in order to increase pupils' enjoyment and participation in sport, including both inter-school competitions and the 'Pacesetters' before-school sporting activity.
- Leaders ensure that staff put the needs of pupils first. Inspectors asked many pupils about the contrast in their experiences between the two separate schools and the recently merged primary school. A very large majority of pupils told them how they thought that things were better. Two pupils summed up the views of others, one by saying, 'I like it now it's one big primary school', and another adding, 'It is not a big step now from Year 2 to Year 3'.
- A large majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, or whom inspectors met during the inspection, expressed positive views of the school and its leadership. However, a small minority of parents did not think that communication from leaders was as good as it should be. These parents explained that leaders do not consistently provide parents with information as to why they have made the decisions they have, or that leaders do not take sufficient account of parents' views. Some parents also expressed unhappiness that they receive too little notice of news, events or changes.
- Most members of staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey also expressed positive views of all aspects of the school. A number stated that they understood that leaders have needed to make many adjustments quickly to ensure that the school functions in a united, coherent way following the merger. However, a small minority did not feel that leaders have fully considered their opinions or told them sufficiently well why some changes have come about.
- Although the leaders of English and mathematics have undertaken careful monitoring of the progress pupils are making in these subjects, leaders for other subjects have not yet had the opportunity to do this. This means that they do not currently have a sufficient understanding of how well pupils are learning in the different areas of the curriculum. They are, therefore, unable to pass this information on to the governing body.

Governance of the school

- The governing body performs its strategic role very effectively. Governors are both confident and knowledgeable about all aspects of the school's work and are able to explain these in an assured manner. While rightly offering their strong support to the school's senior leadership and mindful of the hard work of staff, they are determined that the school must improve further so that it provides an outstanding education. They visit the school regularly to see how quickly leaders are attending to the school's priorities and that pupils' achievement continues to improve.
- Minutes from meetings of the governing body show that governors are fearless in holding leaders to account. They challenge them effectively and are very aware that,

for example, leaders need to do more to ensure that staff plan well so that the most able pupils make the progress they should.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The senior leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. There is a clear culture of vigilance within the school. Staff are clear that, above all, they must always do everything possible to try to protect any child who is at risk of harm. Staff receive good training in the many different aspects of safeguarding, including in areas of recent national concern such as radicalisation. Leaders immediately give new members of staff all relevant safeguarding documentation, along with information on precisely how they must report a concern.
- The clear and detailed safeguarding records that inspectors saw during the inspection indicate that leaders do not hesitate in working with external agencies to protect pupils.
- The school provides a good level of detail for parents on its website as to how to keep their child safe online. Leaders also arrange highly useful information evenings to alert parents to the latest hazards for children using the internet, social media or mobile technology.
- All visitors, including parent volunteers, are given a safeguarding leaflet upon arrival at Earls Barton Primary School. This sets out how they should respond to a pupil who makes a safeguarding disclosure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are ensuring that they consistently apply the school's new behaviour system. This means that pupils understand what staff expect from them. Pupils therefore settle down quickly to their work and remain engaged.
- Teachers plan effectively so that pupils develop the skills of working both collaboratively and independently. Pupils learn to work well, both on their own, with partners and in groups of many different sizes. For instance, pupils in Year 6 were discussing how to design a healthy snack and why using some different pictorial forms, such as diagrams, could be more effective than others might be when presenting their ideas to the class.
- Classrooms are orderly, purposeful spaces where teachers probe pupils' understanding by asking them good questions.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They help pupils to know and understand new things without assisting them excessively. As a result, pupils who receive support become more independent over time.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and this helps them to clarify the misconceptions that pupils sometimes have. For example, inspectors saw how, during a mathematics lesson, a teacher of pupils in Years 3 and 4 noted quickly how some pupils were confused about equivalent fractions. She quickly taught them, using the correct

vocabulary, how denominators and numerators can be different, but two fractions remain equal in value. Pupils then demonstrated that they understood confidently.

- Teachers' skills in assessing what pupils can do is good overall, and is becoming increasingly precise. Senior leaders are supporting staff well so that they can judge pupils' knowledge and understanding accurately by the work pupils complete.
- Staff are particularly skilled in ensuring that pupils develop a deep love of books. Pupils inspectors met told them excitedly about the many books that teachers read to them in class, such as 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' and 'Hugo Cabret'. As one pupil explained, 'I love reading. It takes you to other places. It's better than watching a film.'
- Teachers ensure that the work they plan is appropriate overall for the age of the pupils they teach. However, teachers do not plan sufficient tasks that challenge the most able pupils. Inspectors saw many examples in pupils' workbooks across different subjects and year groups where teachers had given pupils of higher ability identical work to that they had given to other pupils. Teachers whom inspectors met agreed that they do not routinely give these pupils work that makes them think deeply.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff teach pupils to become confident learners. Pupils understand the importance of trying their best. They say that they like the new levels of challenge teachers are providing for them. They described to inspectors how staff are guiding them so that they make good choices in their work.
- Pupils are strongly encouraged to stay healthy. Staff teach them to eat wisely, and for those who do not eat a school lunch to bring a healthy lunchbox. Pupils are keen to take part in the good range of extra-curricular opportunities and clubs that help keep them fit.
- Staff also provide opportunities for pupils' mental well-being, including the 'Owl Club' for pupils who benefit from a quiet, reflective space at lunchtime. Pupils who attended this club told inspectors how much they appreciated being able to go to it.
- The very large number of pupils whom inspectors met during the inspection unanimously confirmed that they feel safe in school. They told inspectors how instances of bullying and name-calling were rare and how, when it happens, teachers deal with it quickly, effectively and fairly. Pupils said that they could always either approach directly a member of staff if they were concerned about something or put a message in the 'Worry Monster' in each class. Pupils thought this was a very good way of alerting their teacher if they had a problem.
- Staff teach pupils about a range of risks to their safety from a young age. For example, children in the early years recently hatched chicks, and staff explained why they needed to wash their hands after they touched them. Staff give older pupils good information on, for example, drugs and the misuse of prescription medication.
- Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep safe online. The oldest pupils

were very keen to tell inspectors about how much they had enjoyed, and learned from, a recent visiting workshop about this from secondary-aged pupils from another school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave consistently well. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils remain focused on their work. They are respectful to others and they complete their work neatly. The few pupils whose work is less neat are still adjusting to the school's new handwriting scheme.
- Pupils move around the school quietly and sensibly. They are polite to visitors and consistently take care of school property. Breaktimes and lunchtimes are positive social occasions where pupils mix and play happily together. Staff give the coveted 'Bartonian Award' to those pupils whose behaviour and approach reflect the school's aims and values.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn. Attendance is consistently above the national average.
- In the 2015/16 academic year, the proportions of pupils who were persistently absent from school were exceptionally high. This was particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, where more than one in three were persistently absent. However, the determination of the school's inclusion leader to reduce this has proved very effective. As a result, these proportions fell substantially last year, and have continued to do so this year. School information shows that both the overall level of persistent absence and the level for disadvantaged pupils are now below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check is at least in line with, and often above, the national average.
- Pupils become confident readers. Those pupils whom inspectors heard read used consistently good strategies to pronounce any words they did not recognise. By the time they leave, pupils are reading books of a highly challenging nature with fluency, expression and understanding. They ask themselves searching questions about the texts they read.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 is high in all subjects. For example, last year the proportions who attained the expected standards in different subjects were in the top 10% of all schools nationally. Considerably greater proportions than those found nationally attain a greater depth of understanding. In mathematics, this was almost twice the national average. In reading, half of the pupils attained a greater depth. School data shows that the proportions on track to attain both the expected standards and those of greater depth this year are at least at the national averages.
- School information shows that the proportions of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort on track to attain the expected standards, and those of a higher standard, are at least at the 2017 national averages. Pupils are likely to leave the school well prepared for the

next stage of their education.

- There were no published statistics for the end of key stage 2 for the school in 2017. Because of this, inspectors undertook an extensive scrutiny of pupils' work across all ages, alongside senior leaders, in order to judge the gains that pupils in the school are currently making. This included an examination across all ability groups, as well as for those pupils who are disadvantaged. This showed convincingly that the progress that pupils overall are making this academic year is good across the curriculum.
- Exercise books from disadvantaged pupils show that they are making good overall progress from their starting points. Published data also shows that these pupils attain at least as well as, and often better than, other pupils.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make consistently good gains from their starting points. The coordinator for these pupils, who is also the inclusion leader, ensures that teachers quickly adjust their teaching where any of these pupils are not making sufficient progress.
- The most able pupils are not making fast enough progress across different subjects. Although inspectors found examples where these pupils are making strong gains, for example in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, this is not consistent across all classes and year groups. As a result, not enough of these pupils are attaining at the higher standards.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader is effective in her role and ensures that any members of staff new to their role are effectively inducted so that they will be able to quickly fulfil their role well. As a specialist leader for the early years, she has a high level of knowledge. She ensures that the assessment her staff make of the things children know and can do is consistently accurate. She checks the precision of these judgements with other local schools.
- Staff know children and their needs very well. They understand that most children enter with skills in most areas of learning that are broadly in line with those typically found in other schools nationally. They adjust their curriculum so that any areas of learning where children typically come in with lower skills, such as people and communities, receive particular emphasis. As a result, children make brisk progress in these areas and catch up quickly.
- The early years leader ensures that the curriculum is both wide and interesting, and that all children are engaged in purposeful learning activity. No time is wasted in beginning the teaching of phonics, because teachers commence this work as soon as children begin.
- Children behave well and are very keen to learn. They show high levels of independence and are curious to find out as much as possible. Children cooperate and share well, as well as moving about safely. They often maintain their interest for sustained periods, despite their young age.
- Staff work positively, and in partnership, with parents. They visit all children in their home before children begin, as well as visiting feeder pre-school settings. They also meet with parents on several occasions before children begin. They then ensure that

parents are kept regularly informed of the progress their child is making. The attractive 'Aim High Together, We Can Fly' noticeboards in each classroom enable parents to share information from home about the things their children are learning, such as dressing themselves for the first time. Staff use this information to help them assess the progress children make across the different areas of learning.

- Because additional funding is used well to support disadvantaged children and those children who have SEN and/or disabilities, the children in these groups make good progress from their starting points over time. The small numbers of these children mean that it is not possible to report on their progress within a single academic year without the risk of their identification.
- The most able pupils are now receiving appropriately challenging activities that meet their needs. For example, in mathematics, staff asked these children to consider the question, 'If you add two numbers together, is the answer always greater?' Children had to present their findings to show why it was true.
- Because of good teaching, children make good progress and are ready to begin key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who attain a good level of development is consistently at least in line with the national average. The proportions on track to attain this currently are above the national average.

School details

Unique reference number	121902
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10049001

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Moore
Headteacher	Pauline Shacklady
Telephone number	01604 810371
Website	www.earlsbartonprimary.org.uk
Email address	head@earlsbarton-jun.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 March 2012

Information about this school

- The school changed its name from Earls Barton Infants School when it merged with the former junior school and began to admit pupils in key stage 2 from the spring term 2017.
- It is now a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. Most pupils are of a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly below average.
- There is no published data available for Year 6 pupils in 2017, so it is not possible to comment on the performance of pupils in relation to current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms. Some lesson observations took place with the headteacher or with the deputy headteacher. In total, learning was observed in 23 lessons. Inspectors also scrutinised examples of children's work from the early years, along with an extensive number of pupils' exercise books for different subjects in all other year groups.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and members of the governing body. They analysed the 101 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, looked at the free-text comments submitted by those parents and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered all responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's development plan and self-evaluation, policies and records related to safeguarding and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, the school's information about pupils' achievement and attendance, and records of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Roary Pownall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Walsh	Ofsted Inspector
Becky Ellers	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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