

Ecton Village Primary School

West Street, Ecton, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN6 0QF

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Although improvements have been made, not all areas of the school are yet consistently good.
- Improvement tasks are not sufficiently delegated by the principal. As a result, improvements have not been made as quickly as they could have been.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has not been systematic enough to successfully address inconsistencies.
- Pupils' knowledge of other cultures and beliefs is narrow. While pupils are introduced to various world religions, they find it difficult to remember what has been taught.
- Pupils are not consistently provided with tasks which are well matched to their abilities or needs.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not consistently high. When not sufficiently challenged, pupils become distracted and lose focus in their learning. This is particularly true for the most able pupils.
- Teachers do not consistently address pupils' misconceptions in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing, particularly in key stage 2, is not as strong as it could be.
- Teachers' explanations of key concepts are not consistently clear. Consequently, sometimes pupils are not enabled to deepen their learning.
- Pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities to support their development of scientific inquiry.

The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics is good, and pupils usually achieve the expected standard. Pupils use their phonics skills effectively when reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils feel safe at school and say that the adults look after them well. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in school, when online and when using the roads.
- Pupils enjoy school. As a result of some successful outreach work, attendance has improved over time and is now in line with the national average.
- Provision in the early years is good. The leader knows the children well and has created a purposeful and stimulating learning environment.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - trust leaders and the principal speed up their development of the skills of more senior staff so as to effectively support school improvements
 - the principal and senior staff monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment more systematically, resulting in improved provision for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and thereby outcomes for pupils by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work which is consistently well matched to pupils' abilities so that pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged, motivated and fully engaged with their learning
 - hold consistently high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve
 - consistently address pupils' misconceptions of basic spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - use strong subject knowledge to give pupils clear explanations and provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of concepts
 - provide pupils with increased opportunities to develop their scientific inquiry skills.
- Improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and religious beliefs.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school opened as a sponsored academy within the Hatton Academy Trust in July 2016 after a period of turbulence. The current principal has been in post since this time and, while some improvements have been made, the impact of her work has not yet been sufficient to ensure that the school is now good.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not robust or systematic. The varied inconsistencies observed in the quality of teaching and progress in current pupils' books across the school either have not been correctly identified or have not been addressed in a timely manner. Consequently, the provision pupils receive and the progress they make is not consistently strong.
- Currently, not enough leadership is delegated to other senior members of staff. The principal has begun to develop the skills of more senior members of staff. However, too much responsibility currently remains with the principal. As a result, improvements have not been made quickly enough.
- The leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is shared with Oakway Academy. She is aware of the individual needs of these pupils. Teaching assistants are trained to ensure that they are well equipped to provide interventions for them. However, the day-to-day provision for pupils with SEND is not robustly monitored. Consequently, when pupils fall behind, they are not identified in a timely manner.
- The curriculum offered is generally broad and balanced. Work in pupils' books shows that they benefit from a wide variety of creative and engaging topics which capture their interest, allowing them to learn about the world around them. However, the provision for science is weaker than for other subjects. The school has plans to further enhance its curriculum through offering more extra-curricular activities. However, parents and carers say that they are not always aware of what their child is learning at school, as information provided on the school's website is limited.
- Sports funding is used effectively to increase pupil participation and to enhance teachers' skills in teaching physical education (PE). Consequently, pupils are enjoying PE more and improving their skills in a variety of sports. The school recently won the gold sports award.
- Leaders ensure that the additional government pupil premium funding has been effectively used. Progress and attendance of the disadvantaged pupils are tracked, and leaders target support according to individual needs. As a result, standards and attendance have improved for this group of pupils.

Governance of the school

- While support is in place and some improvements have been made, the impact of the trust has not yet been sufficient to ensure that the school is now good.
- The acting chief executive officer (CEO) visits the school up to three times each week. Through modelling and coaching, he offers support to the principal in building her

capacity for leadership. Her quality assures the work she does through conducting some monitoring activities with her. He also works with groups of pupils to support them in their learning.

- The school does not have a local governing body, and therefore the trustees within the Hatton Academy Trust are fully responsible for the school. They make visits to the school and speak with pupils to gather their views. They also receive regular reports from the principal about the work it does.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because the designated safeguarding leads have ensured that all adults associated with the school receive thorough training in how to keep pupils safe. Staff understand their obligation to ensure that they report any safeguarding concerns, no matter how small they are. The school's safeguarding records show that staff at all levels report concerns to the designated leads, using the school's systems.
- Records show that concerns are dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. Designated safeguarding leads work well with outside agencies to support pupils and families. They are tenacious in their reporting of any concerns they have.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school because the adults 'protect' them. The majority of parents who responded to Parent View agreed with the pupils that they are safe and that their children are well looked after. Summing up the views of many parents, one stated that the staff 'genuinely get to know each of the pupils really well and care about them'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement.
- Teachers do not consistently use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning to plan effectively for all pupils to progress sufficiently well. Work in pupils' books and observations of lessons show that pupils are not consistently given work which matches their ability or their needs.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are not consistently high enough. Work in some books show that occasionally work is repeated unnecessarily. When this happens, learning time is wasted and pupils' progress is not as strong as it could be.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to write at length and across the curriculum. However, misconceptions in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently addressed by teachers. Work in pupils' books shows that while the content of most pupils' writing is improving, spelling, grammar and punctuation are not as strong as they could be. This is particularly true for pupils in key stage 2.
- Concepts are not consistently explained effectively by teachers. For example, pupils are sometimes taught a method for solving an equation; however, the mathematics is not explained clearly and pupils do not develop an understanding of how the method works. Consequently, some misconceptions are further embedded.

- Pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to investigate in science. Pupils are provided with opportunities to acquire facts. However, they are not provided with enough opportunities to then apply these facts by testing their ideas and recording outcomes to develop a deeper understanding of concepts.
- Phonics is taught well throughout the school and helps pupils to develop their early reading skills. Pupils, particularly those in key stage 1, are encouraged to use their phonics skills to support their spelling when writing.
- The quality of pupils' general presentation of their work has improved. Books are neatly presented, which shows that the pupils are now taking more pride in their work. They are keen to show their books to visitors and to discuss their learning.
- Adults usually model the correct technical vocabulary and encourage pupils to use it accurately as well. During a science lesson, pupils were correctly using the terms 'insulators' and 'conductors' to explain their understanding of circuits.
- The trust and the principal have implemented training and support to improve the consistency of teaching. For example, teachers use questioning effectively during whole-class teaching. Pupils are encouraged to explain their ideas and learn from their mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe at school and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when on the internet, using social media, in the community and when at home. Pupils speak positively about the range of opportunities they have to learn about keeping safe through activities such as visits from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), road safety lessons and the Bikeability course for Year 6 pupils.
- All pupils spoken to said that there is very little bullying in school, and they demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference between this and a general falling-out. They said that adults deal with any problems they have quickly and they have faith in their ability to do so fairly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed throughout the curriculum and they have a clear understanding of the fundamental British values. They generally display a caring nature towards each other and demonstrate their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are taught about different religions. However, their knowledge and understanding of different cultures and beliefs remains limited.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions has reduced over time. The school works hard to keep pupils in school and supports those who struggle to self-regulate their behaviour.

- A very small minority of pupils whose behaviour can be challenging at times are well managed by staff. Through carefully thought out behaviour plans, incidents of poor behaviour have reduced significantly. This approach exemplifies the inclusive nature of the school.
- Attendance of pupils has risen over time and is now in line with national figures. Leaders have worked significantly well with outreach programmes, and pupils who were persistently absent from school now attend much more regularly.
- Pupils are well mannered and friendly inside the classroom and around the school. The vast majority of pupils respond quickly and appropriately to adults' instructions, including during playtimes. Consequently, very little learning time is lost to poor behaviour.
- Occasionally, when teachers' expectations are too low and pupils are given work which they are already capable of, they become bored. During these lessons, some off-task behaviours were observed and learning for these pupils was sometimes disrupted. This is particularly true for the most able pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because of the variation in the progress pupils make across the academy. Although some improvements have been made, current pupils do not yet make consistently good progress from their starting points, particularly in key stage 2. This is evident in pupils' books and from observing learning in lessons, and is reflected in the school's own progress information.
- Teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can and should achieve are not consistently high enough. This was reflected in the work seen in books. Tasks are not always well matched to their abilities. As a result, some of the most able pupils waste time on work which is too easy before being moved on to more challenging tasks.
- Current pupils are not consistently able to demonstrate a deep understanding of what they are learning. In a mathematics lesson, pupils were solving problems involving lengths of measurement, yet were unclear of what these lengths might look like. Likewise, in a geography lesson, pupils were learning about lions living in Africa. However, they did not have a concept of what Africa is or where it is in the world.
- In 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 was in line with the national average in reading and writing, but slightly below in mathematics. The proportion achieving a greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics remained well below national figures.
- Pupils with SEND currently make small steps in progress from their individual starting points. However, leaders do not monitor the provision they receive closely enough to ensure that interventions are quickly put in place when they start to fall behind. Consequently, progress is not as strong as it could be.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 was broadly in line with the national average in 2018. Those pupils who do not reach this standard are well supported to catch up, and the vast majority achieve it by the end of Year 2.

- Pupils enjoy reading and they read widely and often. Pupils are keen to discuss their favourite books and authors. A variety of strategies, including phonics skills, are used by pupils to read unfamiliar words. They are beginning to demonstrate a good understanding of what they read and are developing their comprehension skills.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years at levels of development that are generally typical for their age. Children make strong progress and many leave the Reception Year with a good level of development. They are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children and families are supported well when they first start school. The leader visits children's homes and they are invited into school during the summer term to see the classroom and meet their teachers. Parents are invited to attend information sessions, which are generally well attended.
- Provision in the early years is good because the leader has a strong understanding of the needs of young children. She is quick to assess children's development needs and interests and skilfully plans activities based on these. As a result, children are excited to participate in lessons and engagement is high.
- Children are inquisitive and keen to talk about what they are learning. For example, children who were practicing their letter 'r' formation were keen to show the inspector and tell her that they had the letter 'r' in their name.
- Staff monitor children's progress closely and ensure that judgements are secure through regular discussions and reviews of their work. Assessments were externally moderated last year and the leader was praised for her practice. Work in current children's books show that they are making good progress in their learning.
- Parents are invited to participate in the school's online assessment system which allows parents to see what their children have been learning. Parents participate in this by sharing comments and photos of learning which has occurred outside of school.
- Early phonics, reading, writing and mathematics skills are taught well in the early years. Reading books are carefully linked to the phonics programme. Adults encourage children to use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words.
- Parents are regularly invited into the classroom for 'Book and a Biscuit' afternoons. This allows time for parents to read with their child but also to see what their children are learning. These sessions are enjoyed by parents and children alike.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and statutory duties are met. Children generally work well together and support each other's learning. Relationships are strong between adults and children, allowing children to feel safe and secure. However, some children are over-reliant on adults and look to them for assurances. The leader has identified this as an area to focus support so as to better prepare children for key stage 1.
- Activities have a clear purpose and all areas of learning are catered for both indoors and outside. The outdoor area has recently been improved and is now an exciting place to be. The children particularly enjoy the new mud kitchen and the trike path. However, sometimes children need to be directed to those activities which are suited to

their needs rather than independently choosing them. Leaders have identified that this is happening and are working to address it.

School details

Unique reference number	142400
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10087320

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	William Thallon
Principal	Kate Cleaver
Telephone number	01604 409213
Website	www.ectonvillageacademy.org.uk
Email address	office@ectonvillageacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The principal took up her post when Ecton Village Primary converted to a sponsored academy in July 2016. The academy is sponsored by the Hatton Academy Trust and is in receipt of support from the trust.
- There have been considerable changes in teaching staff since conversion.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized school, with 85 pupils.
- The size of year groups fluctuates and therefore pupils' outcomes may not be consistently published, as to do so may identify specific pupils.
- Acorns Pre-school integrated with the school in March 2017.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in nine lessons across all classes jointly with the principal. Work in pupils' books covering a range of subjects, abilities and year groups was looked at together with the principal.
- The inspector met with the principal and with leaders responsible for SEND and early years. The inspector also met with a higher-level teaching assistant who works with families.
- The inspector met with the chair of directors and the acting CEO of The Hatton Academy Trust.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils formally to consider their views of their school. She also spoke informally with pupils during lessons and during breaktimes.
- The inspector considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and written comments from 13 parents, and spoke informally with five parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the academy improvement plan, directors' board minutes as well as principal's reports, the academy's most recent information on pupils' progress and achievement, and information related to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Heidi Malliff, lead inspector

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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