

INSPECTION REPORT

EARITH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Earith, Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridge

Unique reference number: 110737

Headteacher: Mr P Wall

Reporting inspector: Keith Sadler
16405

Dates of inspection: 14 - 16 February 2000

Inspection number: 189416

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Earith Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE17 3QB
Telephone number:	01487 841868
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Pritchard
Date of previous inspection:	7 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a mixed village, rural community. Most houses are privately owned, and most parents are very supportive of their children's education. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals, six per cent, is below the national average. The school has 139 boys and girls on roll aged between four and eleven years who are taught in five classes. None of these has English as an additional language. There is an average number of pupils identified as having special educational needs, of whom four have statements, which is above the national average. Taken overall, the children's attainment on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good and improving school, where pupils achieve above average standards, the quality of education provided is good, the children are taught and learn well and they enjoy their lessons. There are a number of strengths and no significant weaknesses. The leadership and management of the school are very good, finances are effectively managed and appropriately focused on agreed and established priorities. Taking into account the average attainment of children on entry, the above average standards achieved on leaving and the school's capacity for further improvement the overall effectiveness of the school is good. The total cost per pupil is high compared with other schools nationally and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment is above average overall and well above average in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good overall, with almost half of all lessons being very good and all being at least satisfactory.
- Pupils learn well, enjoy their lessons and almost all behave very well.
- The leadership by head, governors and subject co-ordinators is very good.
- The arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare and health and safety are excellent.
- All the staff, teaching and non-teaching, work very well together as a team, create a very strong ethos for learning and make a good contribution to the standards achieved.

What could be improved

There are no significant weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The good developments made since the last inspection in October 1996 have helped the school to further strengthen the standards achieved by the pupils. All of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been tackled well and have brought benefits to the pupils, and most have been addressed with both rigour and commitment. Some of the previous Key Issues are now strengths of the school. For example, the balance of curriculum time has been carefully considered. As a result, the curriculum is now broad and taught in such a way as to meet the needs of all the pupils. There are now excellent arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. There have been significant improvements in the work of the subject co-ordinators and the curriculum for science is now a particular strength of the school. The curriculum for design and technology is good. The school is well placed to continue to improve in the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	D	A	A
Mathematics	A*	B	A	B
Science	A	D	B	C

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The children in reception attain standards that are in line with the national expectation for five-year-olds. There are above average standards in language and literacy and mathematics. At the age of seven pupils attain above average standards overall. Attainment in mathematics is very high and a strength of the school. Reading is well above the national average, and writing above. By the time that pupils are eleven, standards overall are well above the national average both in comparison with all schools and similar schools. The work the pupils were doing during the inspection confirms the standards gained in national tests. The school has set challenging targets for the year 2000, with almost all eleven-year-olds to gain the national expectations in English and mathematics; the pupils are on course to achieve this, with a significant minority likely to gain higher than national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons; they are attentive, concentrate well and are positive in their attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave very well. This is a result of the good teaching and challenging work set which engages the pupils. Pupils behave very well in and around the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils help each other, enjoy working in groups and are confident and secure.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils like coming to school.

These are strengths of the school, where pupils like the school, are respectful of each other and all adults. They welcome visitors, take pride in their achievements and are keen to show their work to others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. >Satisfactory= means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall the quality of the teaching is good with almost half of all lessons being very good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of basic skills is good. There are no significant weaknesses. The teachers ensure that the work is challenging for all pupils, they have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and they make very good use of the time and resources available. The good teaching helps the pupils to learn well, particularly in the Key Stage 2 classes where the pupils' learning is consistently very good and pupils make rapid progress in all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum covers all the required subjects very well and is cleverly organised to enable all the pupils, whatever their ability, to tackle

	work at their own level. There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well supported through carefully prepared tasks which help them to progress suitably in line with their individual work programmes.
Provision for pupils personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The staff present very good role models; there is a good ethos for learning which helps the children to develop good moral and social values. There are good arrangements to support spiritual development and satisfactory provision for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good arrangements are in place to ensure the pupils' health and safety and ensuring pupils' welfare.

The quality of the provision in each of these areas is at least good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, is suitably more difficult as the pupils become older, and is supported by a range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum fully meets the statutory requirements. The curriculum for English and mathematics is particularly strong due to thorough implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. However, some time could be saved by removing reading time which is provided in addition to that recommended within the National Literacy Strategy Framework. There are excellent child protection procedures in place.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher's leadership is good and effective. He has developed a good ethos for learning. The work of the curriculum co-ordinators is very good. They take a positive and strong lead in their subject responsibilities and this has led to improvements in the quality of the teaching and the standards attained.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is outstanding in all respects. They are well organised, deeply committed to the school and have an excellent knowledge of the work of the school. This helps the governors to fulfil their responsibilities very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are excellent arrangements in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning. All the staff are involved very well in this, and as a result adjustments are made to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	This is good. The accommodation is used very well, the non-teaching staff make a valuable contribution to the standards achieved, and learning resources are used to best advantage. The information and communications technology resources are particularly good.

These are further strengths. The school is led and managed well. All contributions from staff are valued, and they work very well together for the benefit of the pupils. There is a clear focus on raising achievement which permeates through the school from the excellent work of the governing body, headteacher and staff. Resources are effectively focused to meet the carefully considered needs of pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being comfortable to approach the school with questions or a problem.• The high expectations for children to do their best.• Their children like school.• The school working closely with parents.• Information provided about children's progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consistency and guidance in homework.• More opportunity for extra-curricular activities.

The inspection confirms the parents' views regarding the positive features of the school. Teachers are willing and available to discuss any concerns parents may have; they work with parents to resolve any problems and provide a very good range of information about the children's progress. The range of homework set is similar to other schools and staff are aware of the need to become more consistent in the homework set. The number of extra-curricular activities available is suitable, though more emphasis could be placed on team games.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Attainment is above average overall, and well above average for mathematics.

1. Children make sound progress in their learning through the reception year. They enjoy looking at books, turning pages carefully and looking in detail at the illustrations. Using good speaking skills they are able explain the storyline and identify their favourite part of a story. By the time they are seven, due to good teaching where pupils are supported well, they attain above average standards in reading. They read with confidence, accuracy and good expression. Standards in English for the oldest pupils are well above average, both in comparison with all and similar schools. The pupils' are sophisticated readers, learn quickly and the most able are very fluent avid readers who are enthralled and excited when providing lucid and coherent opinions about plot, character and setting using a broad range of sophisticated reading skills. Pupils use literacy skills very well in all subjects; this is the result of good teaching where teachers ensure that they focus on aspects of reading development in many subjects.
2. Standards in writing, whilst not as strong as reading, mathematics or science, are above the national average and are improving. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy as well as a focus on spelling in the last year has helped to bring about improvements in writing. By the time they leave school, pupils attain good standards. They are able to use correct punctuation within sentences, write thoughtfully to support an argument and convey meaning. Pupils are particularly skilful at using computers for word processing. Pupils are confident, well-skilled and knowledgeable in using sophisticated word processing packages for writing. For example, some upper Key Stage 2 pupils in design and technology were making books about aspects of geography being learned (for example the water cycle) using very good information technology skills in their writing.
3. At the age of 11, standards in mathematics are well above the national average, and have been very high over the past four years. At the age of five, the pupils are confident in using mathematical language. They can identify and name a range of three-dimensional shapes, can order well and they can count sets of objects reliably. Pupils attain very high standards at the end of Key Stage 1 with a very high proportion of pupils gaining above expected standards. This is due to the very good teaching of mathematics. In a mental calculation session, for example, the rapid challenging and demanding teaching led to an enthusiastic and excited response of the pupils, who showed very good calculation skills using number cards and 100 squares. Pupils learn quickly and well throughout Key Stage 2 and by the time they reach the upper classes in the key stage, they are able to prepare and solve complex mathematical problems successfully and provide checks for their solutions. One group of pupils, for example, when planning and finding routes using compass points were able to relate this well to fractions of a turn and to measure rotation.
4. There has been a considerable emphasis on improving the teaching and learning of science and this has helped to improve standards. The focus on learning through scientific investigation has been a good strategy. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have a good understanding of key scientific concepts. For example, in one lesson on learning that forces can change the shape of objects, a seven-year-old was able to explain accurately the notion of a fair test by suggesting that it would not be a fair test because all the balls of playdoh were different sizes but that it would be a fair test if the balls were the same size. These children were excited in their learning because the tasks were made interesting by being well-matched to their learning needs. This good

progress in learning is maintained in Key Stage 2. When, for example, some Year 4 and 5 pupils carried out an experiment to burn different materials, they were articulate and skilful in evaluating the process of changing materials and were able to explain the outcomes of the test clearly and accurately. Standards attained by the age of 11 are well above average in comparison with all schools, though are in line in comparison with similar schools.

Teaching is good overall, with almost half of all lessons being very good.

5. The quality of the teaching is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to the good standards. The teachers invariably plan their lessons very well to ensure that all the pupils are challenged by the work. For example, in a literacy lesson for the oldest infants, the planning was excellent with clear learning objectives. These were translated into a very well-structured weekly programme of work which was well-pitched to provide a good challenge for all the pupils. Here the teacher made very clever use of the pupils' comments, constantly demanding that they check for sense when they were reading and spelling out rhymes in a big book "Hayley Muffet – Spider Woman". The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school.
6. Teachers almost always ensure that there is a brisk pace to the learning, and lessons are organised well to meet the planned objectives. For example, in a very good upper Key Stage 2 PE lesson, which was structured very well, there was a good warm-up, clear objectives were shared with the pupils, and many opportunities were provided to develop creatively and to practise for improvement in rolling and bending activities. Here the pupils listened carefully, concentrated well and made rapid progress.
7. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils are able to achieve, and make sure that the work set meets the different abilities and ages of the children in the class. For example, in one mathematics lesson for children aged seven and eight, the teacher was very skilful in ensuring that the work set was made suitably different for the two age groups. One group was sitting on the mat and being taught on one side of the white-board and the other at the desks from the reverse of the same board. Here the pupils were managed very well. The pace of learning was very fast, the pupils settled very well and worked quickly and effectively in recording "near doubles".
8. The staff make very good use of resources which are very well prepared to support the objectives of each lesson. The school is particularly well resourced for information and communications technology, and the teachers are skilful in making use of the very many high quality computers to support the children's learning. These are used in almost all class lessons and the pupils learn quickly and well making use of appropriate software which has been well managed and organised to help the learning to progress.

Pupils learn well, enjoy their lessons and usually behave very well.

9. The good teaching helps the children to learn effectively and with enjoyment. The children respond enthusiastically and excitedly in many lessons; they thoroughly enjoy working together in groups, concentrate well and because the work set is pitched at the right level they are confident in tackling new work. For example in a design and technology lesson a group making books to explain the water cycle persevered very well even when there were some difficulties; they helped each other and worked at a good pace.
10. Parents and pupils state that they enjoy school. The youngest are made to feel secure and confident and are helped by the oldest children when they first come to school.

This is helped by the adults listening carefully to what the children have to say, which makes for a very positive learning ethos.

11. The pupils' behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is generally very good and is usually managed well by staff. However, occasionally in the youngest class, the children do not listen well enough to the teacher.

The leadership by headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators is very good.

12. The school's aims are met in practice. All the staff and governors work very well together to support the pupils' learning. Governors make an excellent contribution to the standards attained in the school. They are very well organised, work effectively, have a clear view of the strengths and future needs of the school and have a strong and appropriate sense of direction for the school in the next few years. They keep themselves very well informed about what is happening in the school both by direct observation of teaching and learning, talking with staff and receiving a very good range of information from the head and teachers. As a result, they act as outstanding "critical friends" of the school and fully meet their roles and responsibilities.
13. The headteacher provides effective leadership. He has built a very strong team of staff who are deeply committed to the school; he facilitates their development well and ensures that all are suitably supported in their work. He has led an excellent programme to monitor and evaluate the quality of the educational provision.
14. The co-ordinators are particularly effective. The teaching staff are open to suggestions, enjoy learning from each other and are enthusiastic in improving the quality of the education provided. Their contributions are valued and built on and as a consequence the school is well placed to make further improvements.

The arrangements to ensure the pupils' welfare and health and safety are very good.

15. The staff have a good knowledge of each pupils' strengths and needs, and are careful to ensure that the progress of children with special educational needs and particular gifts and talents are effectively noted. There are very good practices and procedures in place to make sure that the whole school is made safe for the pupils. The supervision of the pupils is very good and there are effective arrangements to ensure that any safety hazards are quickly dealt with. There are excellent arrangements for child protection which are fully in line with requirements.

All the staff, teaching and non-teaching, work very well together as a team, create a very strong ethos for learning and make a good contribution to the standards achieved.

16. There is a strong sense of unity of purpose and teamwork in the school. Contributions from all staff are encouraged to help to make sure that the curriculum provided is constantly improved and updated. The staff are respectful of the pupils' views; they know the children very well and work hard to ensure that from the time when they enter school the children are made to feel safe and secure and individually valued. Parents' views are sought and there are good arrangements to provide information about the work and life of the school. Each of these aspects helps to build a strong and caring team where relationships are good and the pupils' sense of self-worth is strengthened.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

17. There are no significant weaknesses noted.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	44	39	17	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school=s pupils

Pupils on the school=s roll

	Nursery N/A	YR -Y6
Number of pupils on the school=s roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		139
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR B Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school=s special educational needs register		30

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

X Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	7	10	17

X National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	5	7
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	14	14	16
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	82	82	94
	National	82	83	87

Teachers= Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	82	88	88
	National	82	86	87

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

X Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	8	9	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	14	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82	88	88
	National	70	69	78

Teachers= Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	8	9	9
	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76	88	88
	National	68	69	75

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black B Caribbean heritage	0
Black B African heritage	0
Black B other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	139
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR B Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR B Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	102

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black B Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black B African heritage	0	0
Black B other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
Total income	250841
Total expenditure	242827
Expenditure per pupil	1711
Balance brought forward from previous year	17640
Balance carried forward to next year	25654

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	155
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	37	7	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	50	0	7	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	54	2	2	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	59	14	2	5
The teaching is good.	35	59	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	37	14	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	26	9	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	35	13	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	39	55	6	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	54	2	4	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	48	17	7	7

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' views expressed in the returned questionnaires are broadly in line with those outlined in the parents' meeting. Thirteen parents attended this meeting.