



Earith Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110737
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278499
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Richard Cheetham LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Community		PE28 3QB
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01487841868
Number on roll	142	Fax number	01487841868
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Martin Kennedy
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Hilary Williams

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 28 February 2006 - 1 March 2006	Inspection number 278499
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small, rural school in the village of Earith, near Huntingdon. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below average as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Nearly all pupils are of White British background and the percentage of pupils whose first language is other than English is very low. There are more boys than girls. Attainment on entry varies significantly each year and is broadly average. Over the past two years, there have been major staff changes. Currently, the headteacher is absent through illness. The school has a part-time acting headteacher and is aided by two part-time, temporary assistant headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of this school is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's view of its effectiveness. Pupils now make satisfactory progress. They start school with average skills and make good progress in Reception because of some good quality teaching and learning based on careful checks of their progress. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are average. However, the quality of pupils' writing and their ability to solve mathematical problems are relative weaknesses. Until recently Year 6 pupils made unsatisfactory progress from Year 2 but the inspection confirmed that they are now making satisfactory progress. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. They feel well cared for, behave excellently and have good attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching but not yet enough to enable pupils to make good progress because staff do not make consistent use of assessment information. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The acting headteacher works well with the two assistant headteachers. The school has not been efficient enough in checking how well it is doing but now better self-evaluation is having a positive impact on standards. They have not taken effective steps to improve since the previous inspection until recently and it is now moving forward as evidenced by improvements in pupils' progress and behaviour. Governors are very committed to helping the school improve and are now more rigorous in holding it to account for its performance. Parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school but some are concerned about the uncertainty over senior staffing.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils improve the quality of presentation of their written work and older pupils' writing of complex sentences.
- Improve pupils' capacity to apply number skills to solve problems.
- Be more rigorous in checking how well pupils are doing and using that information to ensure they are set hard enough work.
- Improve the school's systems for checking its performance and using the information to identify improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Reception pupils make good progress and most will reach the standard expected at the year's end. Year 2 pupils are now making good progress from their starting points and reach at least average standards in English and mathematics. Year 6 pupils are now making satisfactory progress but their achievement, prior to this year, was unsatisfactory and they were not meeting their targets, although these were very challenging. The school has reviewed these and pupils are on track to reach them. The slow progress was largely due to inadequacies in checking pupils' progress, and the number of staff changes. Better progress since September is due to some improvements in assessment and better quality teaching and learning. By Year 6, pupils speak

confidently and listen attentively. They read accurately and with sensitivity. Their writing is below average with weaknesses in presentation and writing complex sentences. In mathematics, they make satisfactory progress in number work and in explaining how they worked out the answers. They make slower progress in using their number skills to make estimates, check their work and apply the skills in other situations such as problem solving. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and good progress in art and design and design technology. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They enjoy opportunities to reflect on important issues, like the assembly about personal responsibility and environmental pollution. Behaviour is exemplary and has improved greatly in recent months because staff have raised pupils' understanding of what is acceptable. Pupils enjoy school, pay close attention in lessons and work hard. They say that teachers make learning fun. Attendance is well above average. The good lessons in personal, social and health education ensure that pupils know how to stay safe and be healthy. They choose fruit for break time snacks, play energetically in the playground and enjoy plenty of physical education lessons. They also know about road safety and cycling proficiency. The emphasis on pupils working together develops their social skills and gives them the confidence to get on in the next stage of schooling and later life. Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the school community through the school council and taking on responsibilities as they grow older. They also make a good contribution to the wider community through performing in concerts, distributing harvest parcels and supporting charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers gain pupils' attention through effective use of the interactive whiteboards and maintain their interest through practical activities. This was shown in a Year 6 lesson where pupils made good progress in learning about square numbers before going on to work on ratio and proportion. Where teaching is satisfactory, pupils spend too long on routine exercises rather than applying what they have learned. Teachers establish very good relationships with their pupils so that they want to learn. In the best lessons, teaching assistants are well briefed and make a very good job of supporting groups of pupils but this is not consistent. Where it works well, all ability groups are effectively helped to work at their own level and pace and meet with success. However, sometimes tasks are not closely enough matched to individual needs and pupils' books show all ability groups doing the same work at the same level. This arises because of the lack of rigour

in checking on pupils' progress and what they need to do to improve, and involving them in setting their own improvement targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Reception children are introduced well to a good range of activities that help them make good progress. The curriculum helps most pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy and ICT skills, and good progress in art and design, and design technology. However, the curriculum does not cater well enough for the development of writing and some mathematical skills. Curriculum planning, while meeting statutory requirements, is not finely tuned enough to meet all pupils' needs. A curriculum strength is the benefit pupils get from the range of extra activities and visits. For instance, Reception children followed up a visit to Ely cathedral by drawing incense holders and creating stained glass windows.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and welfare is satisfactory. The school has all the required procedures in place to ensure that pupils are protected and well cared for in school. The recent focus on improving behaviour has been highly successful and the pupils say there is now no bullying. They also say there is always an adult to go to if they are worried or upset. They appreciate being able to write notes to given adults seeking their advice and guidance on matters of concern within school or beyond. The systems the school has had for checking how well pupils are doing in their learning have not been good enough to ensure they make satisfactory progress. The school has resolved this and the present systems for tracking how well pupils are learning are having a positive impact on progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher is working effectively with the assistant headteachers to arrest the decline in standards. The school improvement plan contains a wise choice of priorities based on analysis. It includes some straight-forward ways of measuring its impact. There are recently improved systems for checking on school performance and acting on the results but these are not yet embedded in the school's cycle of self-review. For example, the school has some information on pupils' progress which is helping set targets for improvement but these are not used consistently well. The monitoring of teaching and learning has not been good enough until recently and is now helping to improve learners' progress. Subject leaders have begun to monitor pupils' work and some, such as the literacy leader, use this information well to improve aspects of teaching. The co-ordinator for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities helps ensure that those with individual education plans make good progress towards their targets.

Other information on their progress has yet to be usefully drawn together. Governors have supported the school very well particularly during the period of the headteacher's illness and have been well supported by the local education authority. Governors are well organised and ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties. They have good systems for inducting new governors and for taking account of parents' views. In the past, governors relied too heavily on the headteacher. They are now in a better position to hold the school to account and help the school managers maintain the strategic direction. Recent improvements in pupils' behaviour and progress indicate that the school is soundly placed to continue improving.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well together. You told us there are always adults to help you if you are worried. Some of your lessons are good, you pay attention and learn a lot. Your teachers plan some exciting learning for you, for example, when the owls visited. You know how to stay safe and healthy by taking exercise and eating wisely. Mrs Williams has worked hard with the other adults to improve the school so you are making better progress. Your writing is not as good as it could be and we have asked your teachers to help you make it better. We've also asked them to help you use your number work better when you solve problems. The teachers are going to check how well you are doing so that you know how to improve your work. We've asked the staff and governors to be more careful in checking how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to get better still. I hope that you continue enjoying school and wish you well.