



Earl Spencer Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121912
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 281128
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mike Capper RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Streatfield Road
School category	Community		Spencer Estate
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Northampton, Northamptonshire NN5 7DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 751130
Number on roll	224	Fax number	01604 591306
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roger Conroy
Date of previous inspection	15 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Anne Partridge

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated on a large estate in Northampton. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the number identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and a much higher than usual proportion is learning English as an additional language. The most common languages spoken by these pupils are Bengali and Somali. Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception class is very low, with language and social skills being especially weak. In 2003, the school became a primary school taking pupils up to Year 6, having previously only taken pupils up to the end of Year 4.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. The school welcomes pupils from many different backgrounds and works very closely with outside agencies to support pupils' personal and social needs and to safeguard their well-being. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy school. However, rates of attendance are unsatisfactory. Provision for children in the Reception class is good, with effective teaching helping pupils to achieve well from their very low starting points. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' attainment is exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science, although most pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils make the best progress in reading but progress is too slow in mathematics because work is not always matched closely enough to need. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but the quality is inconsistent across the school. Teachers manage behaviour very effectively and plan carefully, but learning is too often comfortable rather than challenging. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The change in school status has been well managed. The assessment of pupils' learning has improved but the school does not make enough use of this information to set challenging targets or to monitor progress from year to year. Nevertheless, senior managers and governors have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, and are committed to its improvement. The school has made sound progress since the last inspection and there have been some good recent developments. This means that the school is moving in the right direction and is able to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise attainment, especially in mathematics by increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils should learn.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that teachers always expect enough of the pupils and match work to differing needs.
- Make better use of assessment information to set targets for what pupils should achieve and to improve pupils' progress.
- Improve attendance by making sure that parents and pupils understand the importance of coming to school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Reception class, good teaching means that children make good progress from their very low starting points, although many are not on target to reach expected levels for their age by the end of the year. Children make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Most reach the targets that have been set for them but these are not always challenging enough to ensure more than satisfactory progress over time. Pupils make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in science and writing, although written work is not always presented neatly. Whilst progress in mathematics is just adequate, pupils could do much better if teachers

expected more of them. Attainment is exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Inspection findings show that there are no significant differences between the progress of different groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, when their starting points are taken into account. Pupils identified as having English as an additional language are quickly integrated into school life and make good progress in developing skills in spoken English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' behaviour is good, especially in lessons. They are polite and friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils from different backgrounds mix well at playtimes, though some can be over boisterous at times. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good and they enjoy school, responding particularly well to practical activities such as art and physical education. However, rates of attendance are below average and this has a negative influence on learning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of different cultures and happily celebrate festivals such as Eid. Pupils diligently carry out responsibilities such as being on the school council and they enjoy managing tasks around the school. Most pupils are confident and gain a feeling of self-worth through these activities. They make satisfactory progress in developing basic skills to support them in the wider world of work.

Pupils have a sound understanding of ways in which they can improve their health, and they enjoy taking part in sports to improve their fitness. They make a good contribution towards the community by collecting gifts for Africa and recycling paper. They understand how they can help to improve the environment by taking care of it and keeping it free from graffiti and litter.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but it varies too much. Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good. Members of staff are enthusiastic and provide good support as children work. They effectively help children to learn how to play together and they use questioning well to encourage discussion and expand children's vocabularies.

In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good when it is based on purposeful and practical activities so that pupils are motivated and work hard. This was seen to good effect in a literacy lesson, when pupils responded eagerly to a writing task after listening to a talk by the neighbourhood warden. Teachers plan very carefully for lessons, but their expectations

are not always high enough and work is not consistently matched closely to the needs of pupils, leading to a slow pace to learning, especially in mathematics.

Throughout the school, teachers are highly skilled in helping pupils to behave well. Good account is taken of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and they are given good help with their spoken English. Teaching assistants work conscientiously with groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, giving them good support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There is a good curriculum for children in the Reception class. Imaginative activities encourage them to participate fully when working alone or with a friend or adult. In Years 1 to 6, there is a strong emphasis on personal development and this is effective, but there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop basic skills by using them in all subjects across the curriculum. The school promotes healthy and safe lifestyles and ensures that pupils learn about each other's cultural backgrounds. Pupils in Year 6 learn to speak French, helping to prepare them for their move to secondary school. Teachers make good use of the local area to support learning and to help pupils to contribute to the community. Activities such as a 'democracy week' teach pupils about their responsibilities. There are a good number of visits and visitors that bring subjects alive and make learning fun.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is very well supported. Members of staff are very caring and there are good arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety. Child protection procedures are robust and pupils at risk are quickly identified and supported. The school works well with outside agencies to help these pupils. A well attended breakfast club gives a good start to the day and has helped to improve punctuality. There are very good procedures for helping pupils to settle quickly when they start school.

The academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has identified the need to make more use of assessment information in English and mathematics to monitor and help pupils' learning. The language development of pupils with English as an additional language is carefully monitored. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified early and progress towards targets in their individual education plans is thoroughly checked.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school judges leadership and management to be good. Inspectors find it to be satisfactory because further work needs to be done to raise attainment. Nevertheless, the change in the school's status has been well managed. The school accurately

evaluates how well it is doing, though there are still gaps in the procedures used to monitor overall effectiveness. The monitoring of teaching is thorough and is helping to improve learning but there is more to do to iron out inconsistencies. However, the growing amount of data on pupils' attainment is not yet used well enough to set targets or monitor the progress of different groups. Parents and pupils are encouraged through questionnaires to contribute to the school's self-evaluation, but few parents choose to do so.

The headteacher provides high quality pastoral support to pupils and parents. A great deal of time is spent working with outside agencies to support pupils' personal needs and to ensure their well-being. The headteacher encourages parents to be involved in their children's education and this is beginning to have a good effect on learning, especially in the Reception class.

Members of staff and governors share the headteacher's strong commitment to raising standards. There have been some good recent developments and building work is scheduled to start shortly. This will significantly improve the accommodation, which is in a poor state of repair. Senior managers have taken the right steps to ensure improvement since the last inspection. The school continues to move in the right direction and is able to improve further.

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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	2	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	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	2	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

Earl Spencer Primary School Streatfield Road Northampton Northamptonshire NN5 7DE

24 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly.

What we liked most about your school

- Children in the Reception classes learn quickly.
- We are very pleased that most of you behave well in lessons and we know that you especially enjoy practical activities.
- Your teachers are kind and caring. They look after you well and provide lots of activities to make school fun.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors are working hard to make the school even better.
- Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you learn even more quickly in lessons so that you do as well as children in other schools, especially in mathematics.
- Make sure that you are always challenged in lessons so that work is not too easy or too hard for you.
- Make more use of information about how well you are doing, to help you improve your work.

What we would like you to do now

- We noticed that some of you have a lot of time off school. It would help your teachers if you could make sure that you come to school regularly.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Capper Additional Inspector