



Earls Barton Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121902
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292254
Inspection date 13 March 2007
Reporting inspector Timothy Bristow HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Broad Street
School category	Community		Earls Barton
Age range of pupils	4-7		Northampton NN6 0ND
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 810308
Number on roll (school)	173	Fax number	01604 811950
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michael Gividen
		Headteacher	Susan Adams
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2007		

Age group 4-7	Inspection date 13 March 2007	Inspection number 292254
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Description of the school

Earls Barton Infant School is below average in size. Children enter the school aged four with standards that are close to those normally seen at that age. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have free school meals is well below average, as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. The achievement and standards of pupils are good. This is because they make good progress through school, achieving standards that are generally above average. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because of the support they receive from well-trained teaching assistants. Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads a committed team which is extremely well supported by the school governors. The leadership team have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but they are trying to make improvements in too many areas at once.

This is a happy, caring school. As one parent reported, 'It is a place where children aren't just taught, they are nurtured.' This is because of the good quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive. The school provides a safe and stimulating environment for learning in which most pupils thrive. The school now has effective methods for assessing and monitoring progress, but teachers are not yet using this information consistently to check the progress of all pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons because they are well planned and pitched at the right level for most of them. In the Reception classes, children take part in a range of stimulating learning activities each day that ensure they make good progress. The curriculum is good, with many enriching activities that pupils thoroughly enjoy. For example, they were very enthusiastic about the 'seaside history' day that had recently been held in school.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The behaviour of pupils is good. They are confident and polite when talking to adults, and kind to each other. Pupils demonstrate a good level of awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle appropriate for their age. They feel safe in school and report that they know what to do if they need help. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school. They are willing to take responsibility, for example, by being playground friends, and have a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils work well together in lessons and the standards they achieve mean that they are well prepared for the future.

Good links with the junior school and with the pre-school organisations in the village help to ensure smooth progress from one setting to another.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of priorities in the school development plan to allow staff and governors to consolidate improvements.
- Use assessment information consistently to identify pupils who could make more progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children in the Reception classes make good progress, achieving higher than expected standards. This progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2 and pupils achieve expected levels. Results of the 2006 tests show that pupils achieved standards that were above average in reading and writing. Standards achieved in mathematics were average because fewer pupils achieved the higher level. Girls achieve higher standards than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. They feel happy and secure and have positive attitudes to their learning. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Their behaviour and attitudes are good. Pupils report that there is very little bad behaviour in school and, if anyone fights, it is sorted out very quickly. Pupils have good relationships with adults and other children. These relationships are characterised by the kindness they demonstrate for each other. Pupils care for and respect the different needs and abilities of their schoolmates.

Attendance is good and above the national average. Pupils exhibit a mature attitude to their own health. They are aware of the importance of a balanced diet and of the contribution regular exercise makes to their well-being. They thoroughly enjoy the daily 'Activate' sessions which exercise muscles and brains before lessons start. Pupils feel safe in school. They report that there is very little bullying in school and that they know what to do if they are hurt or need help. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. They help pupils who sit on the 'Friends bench' by making sure they have someone to play with. Pupils regularly contribute to charities, giving them an insight into the wider community. Although the school council has only been active for a short time, pupils are confident that their opinion is valued by adults. Pupils demonstrate good teamwork and co-operation. They make good progress when working on computers and in English and mathematics. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned, meeting the needs of most pupils and ensuring that they make good progress. Teachers use sophisticated questioning skills, giving pupils the opportunity to think carefully about their answers. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear to pupils, which helps to ensure that they are engaged in their work. Consequently, pupils enjoy their lessons, which are often

lively and contain a strong element of fun. Pupils are well motivated because teachers gain and hold their attention through the effective use of the interactive whiteboards. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to work in groups, which is having a very beneficial effect on their ability to co-operate and negotiate with each other. Marking is consistent and of a high standard and pupils report that they take the advice given by teachers to improve their work. The good partnerships the school have with parents aids the progress pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Personal, social and health education has made a good contribution to the pupils' personal development and well-being. Improvements in the environment in the Reception classes have meant that the school can offer many enriching and stimulating activities. Good opportunities are created for pupils to practise skills learnt in English, mathematics and computer lessons in other subjects. The school provides many enriching activities, such as the 'Life Education' bus, and one pupil reported that the school has 'millions of visitors'. Pupils are able to take part in a range of after-school clubs, such as the recorder club, which develops their interests and enhances the sense of community the school fosters amongst pupils and parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided are good. The welfare of pupils is a high priority and adults work hard so that pupils feel happy and safe. Pupils benefit from the good partnerships teachers have with parents, which means there is continuity of care between home and school. There are effective systems for keeping pupils safe. Well-trained midday supervisors ensure that activities are provided to make lunchtimes happy and stimulating. The school has recently established effective methods for measuring the progress pupils make which teachers are beginning to use. However, teachers are not yet using this information consistently to identify groups of pupils who could make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The strong leadership of the headteacher has helped to create a good team with a common goal of improving the achievement, personal development and well-being of pupils.

The self-evaluation of school leaders is good. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching and make recommendations for improvement. Consequently, they are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. However, the school is trying to make improvements in too many areas at once because there are too many priorities in the school development plan. The school buildings have

been modernised and enlarged, which has greatly improved the environment for learning enjoyed by the pupils. The school takes its responsibilities as a centre of the village community very seriously. One consequence of this is that school leaders and governors have the overwhelming support of parents and the 'Friends of the School' association. Governance of the school is good, with some outstanding features. The level of support offered to the school is excellent. Governors are well trained and extremely knowledgeable and well placed to develop their role of critical friends still further. The school demonstrates a good capacity for future improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the help you gave me when I visited your school. I felt very welcome at Earls Barton Infant School. If you remember, I came to look at all the work that you were doing and to talk to you and your teachers. I enjoyed meeting you and thought you were friendly, well behaved and polite. You are kind and caring towards others. I know that you work hard and do well in your lessons. You feel safe in school and I agree that an adult will always step in to help you if needed. I was pleased to find out that you all enjoy school.

Your headteacher and the school governors have worked hard to give you a good start to your education. Your teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you and provide exciting activities for you to take part in.

I also think there are some things that the school could do better.

- Make sure that you all do as well as you could in lessons.
- Make fewer changes at any one time in the way you are taught.

Continue to work hard in lessons and I am sure that some of you will do even better than you are now.