

Easton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124579
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293040
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Nelson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Spencer
Headteacher	Miss Nyree Martin
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	The Street Easton Woodbridge Suffolk IP13 0ED
Telephone number	01728 746387
Fax number	01728 747557

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving the village of Easton and surrounding areas. Nearly all of the children are White British, with a handful from other White backgrounds. Around a quarter of the children have been identified by the school as needing extra help with their learning. Fewer children are eligible for free school meals than in most schools. When children start in Reception they generally have the skills and knowledge expected of their age. The school has undergone extensive building improvements since the last inspection. It has also been through a very unsettled period with many staff changes. Currently there is an acting headteacher while the school recruits a new permanent headteacher.

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. It went through an unsettled period when older children did not make enough progress in their learning but the acting headteacher quickly identified the causes of the underachievement and took decisive action to put things right. As a result teaching and learning are good throughout the school so that children achieve well and reach above average standards by Year 2 and Year 6.

The school's turnaround is the result of good leadership and management. The acting headteacher has provided excellent leadership, harnessing the talents and enthusiasm of governors and staff to create a cohesive and dedicated team. Everyone is committed to continuous improvement and keen to accept accountability for their role in achieving sustained development. Although several governors are new to their roles, their enthusiasm and dedication more than compensate for their lack of experience and they are confident in holding the school to account for its performance.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. A real strength of the school is its caring ethos, which is recognised by children and their parents. 'The atmosphere is good and happy and the staff have put in great efforts in creating a cohesive feel,' was the way one parent expressed it. Children commented that, 'You get to know people easily.' The school's small size means that staff know individual children exceptionally well and encourage older ones to care for younger ones, which they happily do. As a result children's personal development is good and they feel happy and secure in school. The school has developed comprehensive systems for checking how well children are doing in English and mathematics but these are relatively new. They enable staff to set challenging targets for children matched to their abilities and ages. Staff also identify where extra help is needed to ensure children do not fall behind, as well as where extra challenge is needed for the most able. The school is now building on these systems to consolidate their use and extend them to science and to other subjects.

Children enjoy school very much because staff give them a good range of activities within lessons and after-school clubs to help them to learn. Children in each class follow a common theme but with work set at an appropriate level for each ability. The school has plans to improve the computer facilities in order to encourage even greater use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects.

Leadership has demonstrated that it has what it takes to continue improving the school. The key challenge for the school now is to appoint a substantive headteacher to build upon the firm foundations that have been laid so that the school continues to thrive and give good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Work closely with the local authority to effect a smooth transition to new leadership.
- Build on the systems for checking how well children are doing in English and mathematics and extend them to science and other subjects.
- Develop the ICT provision and extend its use in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children make good progress in Reception so that they achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1, with some exceeding them. They continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 so that standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics and in some years are exceptionally high. Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is also consistently good. However, children in Years 5 and 6 did not do as well as they should and standards declined from above average in 2003 to below average in 2006 because of staffing issues. The school has tackled those difficulties very effectively and children throughout the school now achieve well, with the current Year 6 pupils on track to attain above average standards in the national tests. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls or of pupils of different abilities or backgrounds. The school has set realistic targets for 2007 and prepares children well for the next stage of their education and adult life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children have very positive attitudes to school. One commented, 'Children say they don't like school but they do really.' Attendance is good and children are enthusiastic in lessons. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are extremely well mannered and courteous. They play harmoniously at break times. Although play is energetic and vigorous it is also conducted with an awareness of the needs of others. Children know the rules that ensure their own safety and adhere to them exceptionally well. For example, they wait until an adult is free to supervise them on the adventure playground before using it. They have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy, and thoroughly enjoy physical education lessons and after-school sports activities. They drink water regularly, eat fruit for snacks and enjoy nutritious school dinners. The school council is fairly new and still developing so there is scope for children to make an even stronger contribution to the school community although they are well involved in the wider community. They perform in the local church and distribute harvest parcels as well as taking part in fund raising events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of the different abilities within their mixed age classes. In class 1 for example, all the children were involved in measuring capacity, but careful planning meant that from the youngest to the oldest they all worked at an appropriately challenging level. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to ensure that all children get the right balance of support and challenge and that those who find learning hard get good support and do well. Children appreciate the way teachers' marking tells them how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers regularly set children targets to aim for but there is scope for children to become more involved in setting their own targets and evaluating how well they think they have met them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of activities to help children to learn. In Reception, children get a good balance between teacher directed and self chosen activities and have the benefit of a well stocked outside area. The school gives children appropriate opportunities to learn about the range of cultures in British society and beyond, including work on different religions. Provision for children who need extra help is good and this is recognised by parents, one of whom commented, 'We are particularly pleased with the organised special needs provision.' The school also has systems to identify the most able and provide extra challenge for them. Trips to places of interest and visitors to school, like the local cheese maker, add interest to children's learning. Although teachers use ICT in other subjects, the school has plans to improve on this through enhanced provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has in place all the procedures required to ensure children's welfare and safety. Pastoral care is particularly good so that children feel safe and free from bullying. Staff are giving children increasing responsibilities through initiatives like the school council and the 'huff and puff' helpers, who support the youngest children at lunch times. The school has comprehensive arrangements for checking how well children are doing in their learning in English and mathematics but these are fairly recent and still becoming embedded, with the intention to extend them to cover science and other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff and governors know how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve because of the effective systems for checking the school's performance. The acting headteacher has done an excellent job in harnessing local authority support to develop the skills and expertise of staff and governors, build on their enthusiasm and enhance their leadership roles. Consequently, the school is buzzing with a real air of enjoyment and excitement. The improvements have been welcomed by parents, who have overwhelmingly positive views of the school, in sharp contrast to what they thought at the time of the last inspection. One summed up their views by saying, 'It is incredible to believe the progress the school has made in such a short time,' while another commented, 'The school has become a much different and improved place in a very short time.' A couple of parents expressed some concerns over having two teachers share class 3, but the good progress pupils make in that class shows their concerns to be unfounded. Governors are very aware of the importance of making a headteacher appointment that will build upon these improvements and develop the school's current strengths. They are committed to accepting the local authority's offer to maintain a good level of external support during the transition.

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Annex A

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	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 April 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Easton Community Primary School, Easton, IP13 0ED

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school a little while ago. I enjoyed talking with you and learning about your school.

You told me you go to a good school and I agree with you. All the adults go out of their way to care for you, and you look after each other very well too. I thought your behaviour was excellent and I was particularly impressed with how polite you all were. You know the rules to keep you safe and are very good at sticking to them.

It was good to see how hard you all work in lessons. No wonder you all do well with your learning. Your teachers give you interesting things to do so that you make good progress. The teachers check regularly how well you are doing in English and mathematics. I have asked them to do the same in science and other subjects. They set you targets in lessons and I think some of you older ones could begin to set some targets of your own. You told me that you use computers in your lessons. I have suggested that once you have a proper computer suite the teachers should look for ways for you to use computers even more often to help you to learn. You and your parents told me how impressed you have been with the way Miss Martin has made improvements to your school and I agree with you. You will know that the school is looking for a permanent headteacher for when Miss Martin leaves and I have asked the governors to make sure they appoint someone who will build upon the good work she has done.

It was a pleasure to visit such a happy school and I am sure you will all continue to work hard in the future. I wish you all well.

Yours truly

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector