

# Eaton Bray Lower School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109447
<b>Local Authority</b>	BEDFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	309986
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Aldridge

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Shaun Haydon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Hounslow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 April 2004
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Eaton Bray Nr Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 2DT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01525 220468
<b>Fax number</b>	01525 223057

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether standards in writing are improving rapidly enough, how well the school supports vulnerable groups of pupils, and how well the school identifies its strengths and weaknesses. Evidence was gathered from the school's assessment information, discussions with staff, a governor and pupils, as well as observations of lessons and school life. Parental views were also sought through a questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school that serves a semi-rural area including a static Traveller site. There are currently 11 pupils from the Traveller community. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Some have previously attended nursery schools and join in the term of their fourth birthday; others do not join the school until they are five. Children attend part-time at first and full-time from the term of their fifth birthday. Although children's skills on entry to school vary, they are below average overall. A few join the school in Years 1 and 2 without having previously been to school. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average, as is the percentage eligible for free school meals, although proportions vary widely within year groups. The school's work has been recognised by the Healthy Schools Award and Artsmark. It also has an approved Travel Plan.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Eaton Bray Lower is an outstanding school. It modestly evaluates itself as good with some outstanding areas, but it is better than this. Its self-evaluation is correct in terms of identifying strengths and areas for development. It provides an outstanding quality of education and care for its pupils and excellent value for money. Staff work exceptionally well in partnership with parents and the community for the benefit of all pupils. Pupils' enjoyment of school is impressive. The supportive parents are delighted with all aspects of its provision. Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher's vision for a school at the heart of its community is shared by the highly committed staff and excellent governors. This is set to become more firmly realised with the building of a new nursery with facilities for the local community and visiting professionals from children's services.

Most children enter the Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills below those expected of their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They get a flying start here, as the provision is excellent. Pupils make outstanding progress in the school and by the time they reach Year 4, standards are well above average. In summer 2007, standards in Year 4 were exceptionally high in reading and mathematics. Although pupils make good progress in writing, standards are average. The school has identified this and has moved swiftly to rectify matters by introducing more opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects. Staff asked the pupils their views about writing too, and they have taken account of what was said by making sure that pupils always have a good reason for writing. It is clear that all of this is having the desired effect as pupils' progress in writing has accelerated.

Pupils' outstanding achievement is linked to the excellent teaching, the most enjoyable curriculum and the high quality support and guidance that pupils receive. One parent wrote that 'School is exciting and fun - they learn so much without realising!' Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, who feel safe and valued in school. Accurate assessment is used effectively to plan tasks that are both enjoyable and challenging. The school has listened to pupils and responded by changing the timetable so that pupils learn about one subject for a whole afternoon. Pupils really like this and say it helps them to finish tasks and remember what they learn. Subject leaders and their link governors are keeping an eye on standards to see whether this development is effective in supporting learning. Staff have the highest expectations, and pupils rise to these. Good learning habits develop at an early stage, and pupils concentrate very well in class. They know exactly what they need to do to improve because they have targets for literacy and numeracy, and they work hard to achieve these. They also respond well to the thorough marking in their books. They greatly enjoy the structured programmes introduced to boost their reading and number skills. All pupils make equally good progress, because staff keep a close eye on the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils and intervene to support any who fall behind. Constructive links with external agencies, such as the Traveller Education Service, ensure that pupils and families get the support that they need. Teaching assistants are skilled and provide good support in class. Many parents play their part too by helping their children with homework, including using holiday packs prepared by staff. Subject leaders use all their assessment information to analyse areas of relative weakness, then these become challenging targets for improvement for the whole school.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Most pupils attend well, but a small number who attend sporadically or take holidays in term-time lowers the overall figure. The school, in partnership with others, does all

it can to improve attendance and has successfully increased this in recent years. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. School rules are well known and respected and parents particularly appreciate the emphasis on good manners. There is a wealth of ways in which improvements and achievements are recognised so pupils' self-esteem grows. They also develop a thorough understanding of their own and other cultures. The outstanding curriculum promotes personal development particularly well. There is an excellent range of visits, visitors and clubs at lunchtime and after school, all of which widen pupils' horizons and provide valuable opportunities for them to socialise and exercise. Individual talents are nurtured and celebrated. Themed days, such as the recent International Harvest Day, add interest and huge enjoyment. A particular hit with pupils is the weekly 'Choices' session where they work in mixed-age groups on topics ranging from French to philosophy. Pupils carry out conscientiously the many jobs they have. For example, they grow vegetables for the school kitchen, recycle and compost, entertain elderly people, make a float for the annual village carnival, and raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. They know very well how to keep themselves safe. They understand well how to lead a healthy lifestyle and many eat healthily at school, but there are still some less healthy items in lunchboxes. Because pupils leave with such high standards in basic skills and are well able to work together in groups and teams, they are very well prepared for middle school and future employment.

There is no complacency in the school, but a continuous drive for improvement. Staff and governors work in a most effective partnership to drive development. Governors are most supportive and exceptionally well informed about the work of the school. They are fully involved in self-evaluation and improvement planning and even lead on certain improvements. Although there were no key issues at the last inspection, there has been excellent improvement, and there is an outstanding capacity to continue to be a most successful school.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Although most children enter the school with knowledge and skills below those expected at their age, they make excellent progress and by the end of Reception most are working at or beyond the level expected in all areas of learning. They quickly settle, because there is good support and effective links with playgroups and parents. Children thrive in the safe and secure environment and rapidly develop good learning habits. Excellent teaching is deservedly seen as a model of best practice. Accurate and thorough assessment quickly identifies those who need extra help or challenge. Staffing levels are good so children get lots of individual attention. Both classroom and outdoor areas are used most effectively to give children a wealth of highly enjoyable experiences, including those directed by adults or initiated by children.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in writing so that they are similar to those in reading and mathematics.

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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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

17 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eaton Bray Lower School, Dunstable, LU6 2DT

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school, especially to those who gave up part of lunchtime to talk to me about school life. I thoroughly enjoyed my day.

Your school is one of the very best! This is because Mrs Hounslow, the staff and governors are all doing an excellent job. Many of your parents also help it to be successful, and so do other people outside school who make sure you have help if you need it.

You are making excellent progress in reading and mathematics. You are also developing extremely well as young people. I found your behaviour outstanding. Most of you attend well too. It was obvious to me that you all enjoy school very much. Staff have listened to you and changed the timetable, so I was pleased to hear how much more you enjoy your afternoons, learning about only one subject at a time. I was most impressed by the number of jobs that you do in school. You also contribute a great deal to the life of the school and the village. It is good too that you have such a clear idea of how to keep yourselves safe and I was pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and get on so well with the staff. You certainly take a lot of exercise in school and most of you eat a very healthy lunch. Because you do so well in reading and mathematics and also learn to work very well in groups and teams, you should do well when you go to middle school. These skills will also help you to get a job one day.

I agree with Mrs Hounslow and the governors that writing in the school should improve. I know that you all have writing targets, and I feel sure that you will work really hard to achieve yours. I wish you all the best for the future.

Mrs S Aldridge

Lead inspector