

# Easton Garford Endowed CofE School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122020
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314191
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Killman HMI

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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	41
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christine Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nicholas Newitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	New Road Easton-on-the-Hill Stamford PE9 3NN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01780 763025
<b>Fax number</b>	01780 763025

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

This small village school is situated in the only area of Northamptonshire operating a three-tier education system, with pupils moving on to middle school at the end of Year 4. Most pupils are White British, live close to the school and are from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is variable but generally at expectations for their age. Since the school's last inspection in 2003, there have been three changes of headteacher. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2007. The school is accredited with the Activemark for sports and other physical activities and Healthy Schools status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This small, happy school provides its pupils with a satisfactory education. It is rapidly improving. Changes in leadership since the school's last inspection in 2003 have made the task of addressing identified weaknesses in curriculum planning and assessment particularly challenging. However, the staff have not been daunted and have made considerable headway, tackling shortcomings earnestly. Under the good leadership of the new headteacher and governors, staff are working with determination to raise pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses forming the basis of clear strategic planning for well-chosen actions. The leadership and management demonstrate a good capacity to improve. The very small size of each age group makes comparison of standards year on year unreliable. The school recognises this and focuses strongly on the progress that individuals are making, ensuring that teaching caters for the needs of all pupils in mixed age classes. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. The school's leadership and management prioritise the retention of small class sizes with high levels of adult support regardless of fluctuation in the number of pupils attending. This enables teachers to plan and deliver work at the correct level for all pupils in classes comprising of up to three different year groups. The best teaching builds well on prior learning, is lively, interactive and supported expertly with moving images on the electronic whiteboard and a wide variety of other exciting resources. These features of teaching generate a good pace, retaining freshness and edge throughout the lesson leading to good learning. Nonetheless, there are some activities provided that are not dynamic or creative enough to be thought-provoking and as a result do not sustain pupils' interest for long enough. This is a main factor that leads to satisfactory rather than good progress. The high adult to pupil ratio provides opportunities for pupils to spend quality time with adults. This high level of support from adults contributes to pupils' good personal development and wellbeing. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, supported by the school's strong Christian ethos. Pupils know right from wrong and have a good understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all statutory requirements and provides opportunities for all learners including those with special gifts and talents and well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to develop satisfactorily. However, subjects are taught discretely. As a result, there are missed opportunities to make helpful links between different subjects to make learning more meaningful and, for example, to increase opportunities for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. This year's focus on healthy lifestyles has had a major impact on pupils' very good knowledge and understanding of how to keep fit and make healthy food choices. While pastoral care is strong, academic guidance is less effective and is still developing. In particular, the use of marking to tell pupils what they are doing well and what they need to do better is variable. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire are mixed. The majority are pleased with all that the school provides and several commented that they have noted 'many positive changes' recently. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that there are several channels open for parents to communicate their views and that sometimes they directly contribute to change, for example, in developing the new food policy. Nonetheless, a minority feel that the school does not always listen to their views and suggestions.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

In the Reception year, satisfactory provision leads to children making sound progress from their individual starting points. Children show mainly positive attitudes and enjoy learning. Regular, systematic teaching of letter sounds (phonics) provides them with a secure start as beginner readers and writers. The environment is calm and orderly. Staff are attentive to the needs and welfare of all children and good adult to child ratios provide plenty of opportunities for adults to work with individual children. A satisfactory range of activities support both adult-led and child-initiated play. Children enjoy playing outdoors, although the space available to them is very restricted. Even so, some of the activities provided are not sufficiently innovative or creative to tempt pupils to experiment, explore and thrive as independent learners.

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

- Make links between subjects to make learning more meaningful and to increase opportunities for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.
- Develop a whole-school approach to making teaching and learning more creative and dynamic. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make steady progress in all year groups. The small size of each year group leads to fluctuation in standards year on year. For example, last year there were only four pupils (all boys) assessed against National Curriculum levels in Year 2. A three-year average of Key Stage 1 assessments shows standards as broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, although with some fluctuation above and below national averages. The school's assessment information for pupils in Years 3 and 4 indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress to reach age related expectations in all subjects by the time they leave.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are characterised by harmonious relationships throughout the school. Pupils feel safe; they say that bullying is rare and that the adults look after them well. Racist incidents are unusual but treated very seriously and followed up through application of the school's effective procedures. During lunch breaks, the supervisors are vigilant and help pupils to have a safe and happy time by engaging with them in play. Pupils are encouraged to behave well and adults readily acknowledge their good behaviour. The new sunshine and cloud system gives pupils a visual reminder of how well they are behaving throughout the day. Pupils enjoy their milk and fruit snacks and show a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. One parent's comment reflects the views of many others, 'My child is very happy at school and has not tried to pull one sickie.' Pupils' attendance is average and the school does everything possible to encourage pupils to come to school regularly. The pupils take on some responsibilities as 'Star of the Day' or as a school council representative but generally there are not a lot of opportunities for them to use their initiative and independence.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Taken overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The best lessons are well planned, lively, interactive and enjoyable so that pupils make good progress. However, some activities are too pedestrian to sustain pupils' interest and challenge their thinking. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have skilful additional support from teaching assistants. All teachers are up to speed with using the newly introduced tracking systems to keep a watchful eye on how well pupils are progressing and to plan for their next steps in learning. High teacher to pupil ratios enable teachers to personalise learning for individuals to ensure that their learning is not compromised in any way by being in a mixed age class.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate balance between the teaching of literacy, numeracy and the other subjects that make up the National Curriculum. The range of activities in these subjects promotes satisfactory progress. However, a shortcoming is that links are not made between subjects to help pupils to apply what they learn in one area to work in other subjects, for example to develop literacy and numeracy skills more effectively. Provision for information and communication technology has been greatly improved with pupils using laptop computers and other technology regularly. The teaching of French has been introduced from Year 1 and pupils from Year 2 upwards are also learning to swim. There is good enrichment of the curriculum with many events, trips and visitors. The pupils describe their trips to places like the Mosque, the Wild Life Park and the Arts Centre as 'brilliant'. The wide range and variety of sporting activities encourages pupils to take regular exercise and opens up many good opportunities for them to take part in team sports with other schools. The range of extra-curricular provision is impressive for such a small school giving pupils much to look forward to and enjoy. All pupils are adequately prepared for their future economic well-being.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The pupils are well cared for and safe. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Effective systems are in place to ensure pupils' safety in school and during off-site visits. The school's inclusive ethos and detailed knowledge of its pupils ensure that every child is treated as an individual. The school has developed effective partnerships with agencies that support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Swift action is taken to intervene and effectively support pupils who require additional help. Those with special gifts and talents are identified and brought together regularly to work on special challenges. The school is aware that pupils benefit from their involvement in evaluating how successful they are as learners. The pupils now all have targets to aim for and consider their achievements at the end of lessons. This is work in progress, however, and has not yet had time to make a discernable impact on learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of teachers' written comments to guide pupils in how to improve their work is variable.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

New to post, and with a quietly determined drive to raise standards and achievement, the headteacher is moving the school forward at a brisk pace. He is ably supported by governors who know the school well and capably fulfil their role in asking challenging questions to support improvement. Subject leadership is a challenge in a small school but teachers show a good understanding and knowledge of the subjects and aspects they lead. The staff gather a range of evidence from quality assurance activities and governors make regular focused monitoring visits. This accurate information is used effectively to inform future planning. The current strategic plan is fit for purpose but overambitious. The school's systems for setting realistic and challenging targets are grounded in detailed, accurate analysis and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. There are some clear strengths in current leadership and management that provide the school with good capacity to improve.





## 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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

13 March 2008 Dear Children Inspection of Easton Garford Endowed C of E School, Stamford, PE9 3NN Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school to see how well you are learning. I enjoyed talking with the school council and other pupils during the day. You told me what it is like to be a pupil at your school and I have thought carefully about all that you said. I would like to tell you about the best features of your school as well as those that need improvement. You have plenty of adults helping you to learn. This means that although your class is made up of pupils in different year groups, you are making steady progress. Many of you told me how safe you feel at school and that you know how to get help if you are worried or upset. Your teachers make sure that you reach, and sometimes go beyond, the standards expected for your age because they keep a close eye on how well you are learning. Your behaviour is good (the sunshine and cloud system is really helping you) and you all get on very well together. You all know how to stay healthy and many of you are choosing to eat food that is good for you. Your new headteacher and the governors are doing a fine job in making the school an even better place to learn. To help to improve the school, I have asked your teachers to find ways of making links between subjects and helping you to use and practise your skills in as many subjects as possible. I have also asked them to make all of your lessons lively and interesting with more chances for you to try things out and use your own ideas. In addition, although most of your parents are very pleased with the school and think highly of it, sometimes they feel that the school does not always listen to their ideas. I have asked the school to think about this and find some new ways to talk to and listen to your parents. I wish you all every success in the future. Yours sincerely Linda Killman Her Majesty's Inspector

13 March 2008

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I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman  
Her Majesty's Inspector