

Earith Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110737
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325208
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Marianick Ellender-Gelé HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Spooner
Date of previous school inspection	28 February–1 March 2006
School address	School road Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QB
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, observed teaching and learning in all classes in the school. The inspector also held meetings with the vice-chair of the governing body, members of the senior management team and had informal discussions with pupils at break and lunch times. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at documentation relating to raising achievement and safeguarding pupils and analysed the responses in parental questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- children's learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the progress made by pupils in English, particular in writing and mathematics
- the use of assessment to improve pupils' learning in mixed-age classes
- the achievement of more able pupils to determine whether teaching was sufficiently challenging.

Information about the school

This small rural primary school serves the village of Earith, near Huntingdon. The school population, after a drop in previous years, is now showing stability and increased slightly in 2008. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very low. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school admits pupils aged 4 in one reception class. The school has had staffing issues in the past which have been resolved successfully. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2007. Recent awards include the presentation of an Activemark award in 2007 and 2008 and the Bronze Eco School award in January 2009.

The school provides community access for Brownies. On-site after school and holiday clubs are run by an outside provider. The pre-school provision, 'Preschool7', for children aged 2½ to 4, is also independent of the school and is inspected separately.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Earith primary school is a good school. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. Attendance is satisfactory. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning and development. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, progress is good and pupils attain standards in line with national averages by the end of Year 6. The school has recognised in its self-evaluation and plans the need to improve standards further, particularly for the more able pupils. The leadership of the school is good. The headteacher, supported by the senior team and all of the staff has made significant improvements since the previous inspection indicating a good capacity to improve. For example, there is now rigorous attention to raising standards, assessment is thorough and performance information is used well. Work to improve writing and mathematics throughout the school has been effective. As a result, achievement for current pupils is good. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The staff ensure that these pupils are treated fairly, regardless of their background or specific needs. The support, guidance and care that pupils receive are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress made by the more able pupils, throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, by:
 - identifying and defining the specific needs of these pupils
 - working closely with pupils and parents to support learning
 - planning activities which match the welfare and educational needs of individual pupils
 - engaging pupils even more in self-assessing and reviewing their work.
- Improve attendance from satisfactory to good by:
 - working closely with some parents and pupils to ensure that they understand the importance of high levels of attendance
 - encouraging and supporting pupils who find punctuality difficult to achieve in the morning
 - continuing to use rewarding strategies to minimise reasons for absence.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

The key features of the outcomes pupils achieve are shown below.

- From a low starting point, when they started school, current pupils achieve well. They meet the standards expected and the individual targets set for them. Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary school.
- Younger pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, particularly in their literacy and numeracy skills and in their personal development.
- Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with specific welfare needs make good progress because of the outstanding care that they receive.
- Boys and girls are enthusiastic in lessons and enjoy their time at school. They love practical activities and discussions. Some high achievers have the potential to do even more if given sufficient opportunities.
- Pupils show curiosity and interest in a wide range of local issues. Members of the school council and eco council are very mature. They describe their roles with pride and are committed to ensuring that all pupils have a voice in school.
- Pupils show caring attitudes towards one another, particularly towards those who are less fortunate. Even the youngest children can explain why it is important to be kind and help each other. Pupils are keen to raise money for charity and they have a good understanding of their local community, such as the importance of the emergency medical charity 'Magpas'.
- Pupils know how to be healthy and why it is important. They are eager to contribute to the design and purchase of the new trim-trail and make full use of the large and attractive grounds for their physical activities.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They play together sensibly and say that there is always an adult they can go to if they have a concern.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to	2

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

their future economic well-being?	
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

The quality of the school's work

The key features of the school's work are shown below.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use questioning techniques well to check pupils' understanding. In the outstanding lessons, all pupils are challenged particularly well and tasks are closely matched to pupils' ability.
- Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and the management of mixed-age classes is a particular strength. On a few occasions, teachers are too ambitious in their planning and leave too little time for pupils to reflect on their work.
- Pupils have access to a good range of resources, including information and communication technology. The resources, in particular the interactive whiteboards, are used effectively to support learning. Access to and use of the outdoor learning space for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent.
- Pupils receive clear guidance about how to improve their work through helpful marking and appropriate target setting, and these features help pupils to make good progress
- Teaching assistants, who have good access to training and appraisal, make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching, learning and guidance. Team work and positive relationships between all staff is a particular strength.
- The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. Good partnerships with other organisations support the interesting curriculum. Particular strengths include:
 - effective projects on understanding and Traveller Communities
 - the comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education
 - the good resources for children who are in the care of the local authority and need high level of support
 - the effective curriculum planning for pupils who need to access the speech and language therapy service.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The key features of the school's leadership and management are shown below.

- The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and the significant staffing and budgetary issues have been addressed successfully with determination and energy over the past two years. Parents overwhelmingly support the new leadership of the school and both pupils and parents say that, ‘this is now a good school’.
- The headteacher has a very good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses. During a series of joint lesson observations with the inspector and a very detailed scrutiny of pupils’ work, the headteacher presented an accurate view of what was needed to improve the school further. Her senior team, during a meeting with the inspector made incisive judgements about past and current provision. Effective action has been taken to address shortcomings. For example, the tracking of pupils’ progress has been much improved, analysis of attainment is now robust and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now good.
- There is harmony in the school between pupils and adults. All pupils are treated equally and given the support they need. Staff are very approachable.
- The school pays high regard to the safety of its pupils. Procedures for safeguarding, including robust risk assessments, are secure.
- The governing body fulfils its duties well and effective monitoring procedures are in place.
- The school makes good use of external agencies. For example, to support the learning for pupils recently arrived at the school and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- The school has a clear understanding of its own community and has taken effective action to analyse its context. Staff know the faith, ethnicity and socio-economic background of pupils and provide good opportunities for them to work with local people. Consequently pupils are proud of their community and willingly explain their views on, for example, the traveller site or the features in the village news the ‘Earith Echo’.
- The school takes account of the views of parents and has made good progress in improving communications through newsletters. The school is aware that further work is needed to work in partnership with some families to improve attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The key features of the Early Years Foundation Stage are shown below.

- In a very short space of time, the teacher-in-charge, who started in September 2008, has managed to provide a calm, bright and purposeful learning environment for her pupils. The support she receives from the headteacher and teaching assistants is invaluable.
- Behaviour is managed effectively. Children work and play harmoniously together. They have ample opportunities to learn outdoors and the chosen activities extend their personal development and independent learning skills well.
- Activities are closely matched to the children’s abilities and interests. Children are challenged in the formal teaching sessions and are encouraged to reflect on what they say and do. Consequently, they make good progress in their communication and listening skills. They are confident and keen to explain why they are proud of a particular drawing or writing.
- Adults supervise pupils well and were observed talking to children as often as possible to encourage their inquisitive nature. For example, the children were observed being attentive during a discussion on rules and, subsequently, they explained clearly why rules are important. They were then able to apply these rules in the whole school assembly. Over lunch several children told the inspector that everyone should be in assembly and they asked the inspector why she was there on the first day of her visit but not on the second!
- The classroom is stimulating. It is a safe place where children are well cared for. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures are robust.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

45 parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. The views expressed by the vast majority of parents were very supportive of the school. The inspector also met several parents. Their comments typically included, ‘the school is moving in the right direction’, and, ‘my child is very happy at this school’. Several parents wrote additional comments praising the headteacher and staff for being so supportive and approachable. Positive comments were made on the good provision for children who find learning difficult. The very few negative comments included the lack of challenge for able children and the need for even more support for children with learning difficulties. This inspection confirms the positive views of parents and carers. The

school development plan already includes specific actions that address the areas parents are critical of.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Earith Primary School, Huntingdon, PE28 3QB

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I was impressed by your confidence and your willingness to talk to me about your school. I judged your school to be good. I've listed the points I particularly liked about your school below.

- Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other.
- Your teachers help you and they work very hard to prepare interesting lessons for you.
- Your writing and work in mathematics are improving and by the time you get to Year 6 you are well prepared to move to the secondary school.
- You know how to organise your work and you try hard to improve. This means that you make good progress.

To make your school even better I have asked your teachers to:

- increase the progress pupils make, particularly for those of you who find work easy
- improve attendance levels.

Good luck and I hope that you will help your teachers to make sure that your school continues to get even better.

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé
Her Majesty's Inspector.

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