

# East Markham Primary School

## Inspection report

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|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 122638          |
| Local Authority         | Nottinghamshire |
| Inspection number       | 327771          |
| Inspection dates        | 10 June 2009    |
| Reporting inspector     | John Francis    |

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.

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|------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                     | Primary  |
| School category                    | Community  |
| Age range of pupils                | 4–11   |
| Gender of pupils                   | Mixed  |
| Number on roll                     |  |
| School (total)                     | 99   |
| Appropriate authority              | The governing body   |
| Chair                              | Mr Stuart Eakin  |
| Headteacher                        | Mr Jeremy Bingham  |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22–23 June 2006  |
| School address                     | Askham Road<br>East Markham<br>Newark<br>Nottinghamshire<br>NG22 0RG |
| Telephone number                   | 01777 870439   |
| Fax number                         | 01777 872322   |
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|-------------------|--------------|
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors over one day. The inspectors visited lessons in all classes, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at school improvement planning, assessment and tracking documentation, pupils' work in English, mathematics and science, and analysed the 43 parental questionnaires returned.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- why mathematics has not shown the same gains in progress over time as English and science, and what the school has done to address this
- the role of staff with specific responsibilities and their influence on pupils' achievement
- the impact of the developing support for able and talented children
- the development of systems to assess, record and track pupils' progress in the foundation subjects.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving the village of East Markham and the surrounding area. The vast majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average. Children start in the Reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. Attainment on entry is generally above the levels expected for children of this age. The proportion eligible for free school meals is very small.

The school has a number of awards including the Investor in People (re-validated in 2008), the Gold Standard Healthy Schools award, the Sports Activemark and an Eco Bronze award.

## 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

This is a good school, a view overwhelmingly shared by parents. The enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher, well supported by all staff, has taken the school forward well since the last inspection. Accurate evaluation from regular monitoring and analysis of data has generated an effective improvement plan giving clear direction to the work of the school. As the current plan comes to its close, school leaders can clearly demonstrate the impact and success of those initiatives. There are further ambitious plans for the future and given the track record of improvement, the school shows a good capacity for continued development.

While children start school with higher levels of skill than normally expected for their age, by the time they leave at Year 6, standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. Consistently good teaching, supported by a good curriculum, ensures all pupils make good progress during their time in the school. This is enhanced by teachers' accurate assessments that are used to plan work that is well targeted at pupils' individual needs. This is exemplified by the high standards achieved by those who have specific learning needs.

Pupils also play a major role in the school's successes. Relationships across the school are strong. Pupils' excellent behaviour and commitment to involving themselves in all aspects of school life ensure all achieve what they are capable of both academically and socially. Pupils have an excellent understanding of issues around staying healthy, supported by activities such as daily 'Brain Gym', participation in local competitions and the opportunities for pupils' to engage in vigorous, active play at break times.

Much of the school's work over recent times has focused on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT), which have been very successfully promoted. However, this has been at the expense of developing a more creative curriculum that would allow pupils to use these skills in other contexts. The staff recognise that this is an important next stage in the school's development. The challenge is to develop this cross-curricular approach while continuing to maintain high standards in English, mathematics and science. There is a relatively new assessment system for the foundation subjects, which relates pupils' standards to nationally expected levels for their age. At the time of the inspection it was insufficiently developed to ensure that pupils made consistently good progress. While there is good provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development, the school recognises the need to broaden pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in the wider national and international context. There have been some positive moves to enhance this but it is still very much work in progress. Aspects of the school's personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum and work in promoting some wider aspects of community cohesion are not yet sufficiently interlinked.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum through:
  - developing a more creative approach that enables pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a wider range of contexts
  - linking subjects more closely to provide greater opportunities for cross-curricular themes and investigations.
  
- Improve pupils' awareness of cultural diversity through:
  - broadening the range of links and activities related to multicultural and multi-faith education
  - making explicit links between this and the school's developments in community cohesion
  - developing systems to monitor pupils' progress in these areas and the effectiveness of the school's policies.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

|   |
|---|
| 1 |
|---|

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 is high and has been consistently so over the last three years. The outcomes for higher achieving pupils are well above the national average for Level 5. Unvalidated results for 2009 at Year 2 show exceptionally high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, well above the 2008 national average. The school has effectively addressed the slower rate of progress previously seen in mathematics.

In lessons, pupils demonstrate an excellent commitment to their work. They apply themselves exceptionally well to their tasks and persevere, even where these are very challenging. Discussions with pupils during lessons show how thoughtful and reflective they are. Some of the paired and group work observed emphasised pupils' excellent social skills and willingness to cooperate and share tasks. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. They demonstrate a commitment to improving their own health and well-being through their lunchtime choices and the high take-up of extra-curricular sports. Pupils' outstanding achievement, good ICT skills and their excellent social development mean they are well prepared for their transition to the next stage of education and beyond.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are particular strengths in social and moral development as seen in the strong relationships and excellent behaviour. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance.

They have a great commitment to the school and to supporting each other at all times. This carries over into their contribution to the local and wider community, for example, sponsoring the education of children less fortunate than themselves.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 1 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress            | 1 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?  | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe?   | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave?  | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?  | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?  | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?                                | 2 |

## How effective is the provision?

A key feature of the good teaching is the very detailed planning, clearly focused on the needs of individuals or groups of pupils, with sharply defined expectations for each lesson. This comes from an accurate evaluation and analysis of pupils' progress and good guidance offered through teachers' marking, probing questions and good classroom discussion. In addition, teaching assistants are deployed well to provide good support for pupils of all abilities. Expectations are high for all pupils and they respond well to these bringing all their excellent intellectual and social skills to bear.

Much of the focus of the curriculum in recent years has been on improving pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. The impact of this can be seen in the standards achieved. In addition, the large financial commitment to improving ICT facilities has improved its use across the curriculum and enhanced pupils' skills. The focus is now moving towards developing a more creative approach to the whole curriculum.

The school gives a very high priority to pupils' well-being and pastoral care. Arrangements for children starting school and for transfer to secondary school are exceptionally well planned and managed. Pupils feel safe and secure, relationships are outstandingly positive, enhanced by pupils involvement through arrangements such as the Together Everyone Achieves More Success (TEAMS) approach, a whole-school version of a school council, which gives all pupils a real voice in school affairs. Parents appreciate the caring, family ethos of the school as do pupils, who are

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

confident that that there is always someone to talk to, including their 'buddies', if they have any concerns.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The quality of teaching   | 2 |
| The use of assessment to support learning   | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support   | 1 |

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Significant amounts of money have been carefully targeted towards improving the physical and academic provision, which has led to the improvements in attainment. Regular, astute monitoring by the headteacher and key staff has enabled the school to maintain these standards in spite of staffing changes over recent times. The headteacher's clear and purposeful vision for the school is shared by all staff and supported by the governing body. Governors have an active role in monitoring the work of the school through a well-planned calendar of visits and activities. The governing body also has a clear programme for the review and revision of policies but is much less systematic about how they monitor the impact of these.

The procedures to keep pupils safe are excellent and all policies meet requirements. The school is extremely effective at ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted well. This is demonstrated very effectively by the provision for pupils with specific learning needs and the high standards this enables them to achieve. The school is part of a very cohesive community; relationships with parents are excellent and those with other schools and the locality are very strong. While wider links are developing there is the recognition that, given the cultural make up of the area, the school needs to extend these even more.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement  | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination   | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers  | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being  | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion   | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money  | 1 |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Since the last inspection there have been major, positive changes to the Reception class provision. This is something recognised and appreciated by the parents who feel well involved in the education of their children. While only being in school for a relatively short time, the Reception teacher has made significant improvements to the facilities; in particular, to what is now an outstanding outdoor provision. A well-designed outdoor 'classroom' provides excellent opportunity for children to move freely between the inside and outside classrooms. The balance of activities across all areas of learning is very effective and there is good involvement of the children in developing and responding to the activities on offer. As a result, children make good progress. Close attention is given to the health and safety of the children but they are allowed to take managed risks, for example, using real tools to saw and hammer on the class 'building site'. The children are confident, behave exceptionally well and willingly engage in discussion with inspectors, demonstrating a high level of social and emotional development. There is a real partnership between the class teacher and teaching assistant who are constantly supporting and encouraging children. Very effective systems for assessing and recording children's progress and the folders of children's work, alongside the more formal assessments, provide an excellent record of their progress.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 2 |

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are extremely supportive about what the school provides for their children. Many additional comments showed that parents view the school as providing a happy, safe and very friendly environment where they feel welcomed as partners in their children's education. Curriculum evenings and opportunities to witness 'first hand' what goes on in school were much appreciated. Many parents wrote in glowing terms about the hard working and approachable headteacher and staff, and the excellent communication between school and home. There were very few concerns expressed and parents can be assured that there was no pattern to these and they reflected individual issues for those parents rather than whole-school ones.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at East Markham Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 90 parents and carers registered at the school.



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|   | Always | Most of the time | Occasionally | Never |
|---|--------|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 32     | 11               | 0            | 0     |

## 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:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- 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.



11 June 2009

Dear children

Inspection of East Markham Primary School, East Markham, NG22 0RG

My colleague and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. It was lovely meeting all of you and your good manners and friendliness towards us made us feel very welcome. This letter is just for you to tell you what we found out about your school. We have also tried to reflect some of the things you told us in our report. Your school is providing a good education and has many excellent things that we would like to share with you.

We feel that you behave exceptionally well and show real care and consideration for each other. All of the adults take excellent care of you and work really hard to make your school an interesting place to come to. All of you make an outstanding contribution to your school and work ever so hard to help others. You did tell us that everyone in school gets on really well and we could see this in our classroom visits and watching you in the playground. You also told us how much you enjoy school and try your best. This shows in the work in your books and the displays around school. Those of you in the Reception class have a wonderful time and do really well in your work. I really like your outdoor classroom and was impressed by the 'workmen' hammering nails.

As you all do so well by the end of Year 6 it is hard to see where you can improve your attainment. However, we know you enjoy your work in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, so we have asked the teachers to plan ways of working that will link some subjects together and let you use your skills in new situations. We have also asked that the school plans more work that will give you a better understanding of the different cultures that we see in Britain today and around the world.

Thank you again for your lovely welcome and we wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours faithfully

John Francis  
Lead inspector

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