

Easton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124579
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340605
Inspection dates	19 October –2 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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 of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Spencer
Headteacher	Mrs Cheryl Singleton
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom focused solely on the inspection of safeguarding procedures. The lead inspector visited eight lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at a range of information including data showing the progress made by pupils, curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work.

Questionnaires, returned by 48 parents, 47 pupils in Key Stage 2, and 12 members of staff, were analysed.

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

- the achievement of pupils overall, including a specific foci on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and the support provided is effective
- the impact of the school's focus on improving the attainment of girls in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the progress made in addressing the key issues from the last inspection:
- the development of provision in information and communication technology (ICT) across all subjects and
- the development of tracking systems in science and the non-core subjects
- the effectiveness of governance, particularly in relation to the promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

Easton is a small, rural school. Almost all of its pupils are of White British heritage. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of these pupils have speech and language and/or general learning difficulties. There are three mixed-age classes. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is integrated into the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. At the time of the inspection there were very few Early Years children on roll. After a period of considerable disruption and uncertainty, the current headteacher took up her post in the autumn term 2007.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

'This is a lovely school at the heart of the village. It is led by a really dynamic headteacher.' This comment typifies the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by parents and reflects inspection findings. Another parent commented that, 'In the opinion of the local community, the school has gone from strength to strength in the past two years.' This is indeed the case. Since her appointment in 2007, the headteacher has made a number of improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching which are now beginning to impact on the pupils' achievement. Inspection evidence shows that teaching and the curriculum are now good. Nonetheless, the school is judged to be satisfactory overall. This is because the improvements in provision are yet to result in consistently good learning and progress.

The overall attainment of year groups fluctuates considerably from year to year. This situation is typical of small schools, where the performance of each individual pupil can have a disproportionate impact on attainment overall. Children generally enter the school in their Reception Year with levels of skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with what is expected of four year-olds. Data from previous years show that children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and that most attain the goals expected by the time they move into Year 1. By the end of Year 2, and again in Year 6, the standards attained in the national assessments and tests are usually broadly in line with the national average, illustrating the satisfactory progress made over time. The inspector's observations of pupils in class and scrutiny of their books showed that some pupils are now beginning to make good progress in some subjects, but this is not yet a consistent feature of all lessons. This is because teachers do not consistently provide their pupils with challenges matched to pupils' different levels of ability. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent, and in some instances does not give enough guidance about what pupils need to do next in order to improve.

The outcomes in pupils' personal development are better than in their academic studies. This is undoubtedly due in some part to the school's effective implementation of the national programme for social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) introduced by the headteacher, which has provided a firm foundation for the good learning that is beginning to emerge. Pupils get on well with one another and show great consideration towards each other. Their behaviour is consistently good.

The school's current paper-based system for recording and tracking pupils' progress remains a useful tool for class teachers as they check on their pupils. However, the lack of an ICT- based system means that the headteacher is unable to easily access information in the variety of different formats she requires for analysis, for example data relating to the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or the

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performance of pupils according to their gender.

Under the clear leadership of the headteacher, the staff work effectively as a team. Self-evaluation is shared and provides an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the grades allocated by the school to some aspects of its performance are sometimes too generous. Nonetheless, the impact of many initiatives to improve provision and raise standards is evident in pupils' better achievement. This demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rates of pupils' progress and raise standards by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide appropriate challenges for pupils of all levels of ability
 - provide consistently clear guidance for pupils when marking their work, so that pupils can see precisely what they need to do next in order to improve.
- Improve the system for tracking pupils' progress so that data can be easily managed and presented in a variety of forms, thus enabling the headteacher to manage the school even more effectively and further improve the rates of pupils' progress.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Some good learning was observed in classes, but this is not yet a consistent feature in all lessons. During the inspection, learning was generally better in mathematics lessons than in English because the tasks set for pupils were most often pitched at a number of different levels and provided challenges across the range of pupils' abilities. Evidence from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work confirmed this judgement. A small number of parents who appended written comments to their questionnaires confirmed the inspector's view that pupils are not always challenged enough.

The most recent data show pupils are making satisfactory progress and there is clear evidence that standards in Year 6 are set to rise this year.

The inspection focused on the learning of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was because this group of pupils represents about a quarter of the school roll. Overall, these pupils make good progress because their specific needs are clearly identified in their individual education plans and they are given good quality help in lessons and when withdrawn from class for individual or small group work.

Pupils told the inspector that one of the things they appreciate about their school is that there are lots of enjoyable things to do. Throughout the school, the politeness and consideration shown by pupils reflect the well established and consistently applied procedures for promoting good behaviour. This consideration for others is also an important element in pupils' good understanding of how to keep safe. Pupils are proud

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of the recent Healthy School award. Pupils' contributions to the school and the wider community are good. There is an active school council, and pupils enjoy the responsibility for carrying out tasks, such as taking the bus register from class to class or operating ICT equipment in assemblies. Pupils regularly raise money for a number of good causes, including Save the Children and Water Aid. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Particularly noteworthy features are the clear moral code which permeates the school and the well developed social skills shown by most pupils. They generally have a good understanding of their own personal development, which is promoted well through the SEAL programme, and appreciate others' achievements. Attendance rates have been in line with the national average for a number of years.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good skills in managing their pupils and in providing clear explanations about new concepts. Pupils' consistently good behaviour and their developing skills in working either independently or with their classmates help create the good climate for

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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learning that is evident in all classes. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting pupils, particularly those with specific learning difficulties, and work well in partnership with teachers. However, even though all teachers display many good technical skills in teaching, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not always as effective as it should be. Sometimes this is because teachers do not manage time well, and this means that pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to work independently on the tasks set. A scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed this, because on some occasions pupils record very little. In other instances, learning slows because teachers do not always give clear enough guidance when marking pupils' work. Pupils' books showed that, in some instances, marking is cursory and comprises ticks and occasional encouraging comments. There are generally too few comments to provide clear guidance on the next steps in learning.

The school has made good progress in addressing a key issue from the last inspection relating to provision, and pupils now use ICT regularly as an integral part of their work in a number of subjects. The headteacher's approach to curricular development is that whatever is offered to the pupils should be sustainable, and with this as a guiding principle she has put in place a good range of extra-curricular activities in sport and the arts which are greatly appreciated by the pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 greatly enjoy their annual residential trips. Further good features are the provision of specialist teaching in French and physical education, and instrumental tuition. Planning for the development of a more cross-curricular approach to learning is well underway.

A comment from one parent reflects the good quality of the provision: 'The school manages to achieve the right balance between a happy family atmosphere and wonderful learning opportunities...'. The needs of individuals are well known to all staff, and pupils feel valued members of the school 'family'. There are very clear, well established arrangements to induct children into school and to ensure a smooth transition as pupils move between key stages and on to the next phase of their education. The school works hard to develop a partnership with parents and to ensure that every opportunity is taken to care for its pupils. For example, the 'Toast Club' is well supported and enables pupils to socialise while enjoying a light breakfast.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

All of the pupils surveyed through the inspection questionnaire felt that the headteacher

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and senior staff are doing a good job. This reflects the pupils' appreciation of the fact that Easton is a very inclusive school in which every child really does matter. Staff with leadership responsibilities have a good understanding of the issues facing the school. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive. Very recent training for teaching staff and governors in using national performance data has helped sharpen their understanding of pupils' performance. In response to the previous inspection report, the school has ensured that systems for tracking the progress of pupils in English and mathematics have been extended to include all other subjects.

The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school is actively and successfully promoting cohesion within the school community and is reaching out to other communities, but there is limited evidence of its success in promoting cohesion beyond the school. Plans are in place to extend pupils' understanding of what it means to live and grow up in other contexts.

The fact that Easton is an improving school, with a well deserved, growing reputation within the locality, is largely driven by the dynamism of the headteacher and the professionalism of the staff team. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's continued development which she successfully transmits to all members of the school community. The school is constantly looking for ways to improve, and analyses the performance of pupils carefully. Its most recent analysis highlighted the underperformance of girls in mathematics and this is currently under investigation. However, the inspection found no evidence to suggest that girls learn less well than boys in lessons.

The school has good partnerships with parents and carers and communicates effectively with them. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are involved in meetings at which targets are set and reviewed. The school has developed close links with a range of professional agencies in order to provide specialist help for these pupils, for example through the educational psychology service and speech and language therapy.

All of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire felt that the school keeps their children safe. Inspection evidence confirms this. Checks on the suitability of adults working with the pupils and checks on the security and safety of the premises are rigorous.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Past performance data show that, typically, children make satisfactory progress. The classteacher ensures that children have regular access to all the required areas of learning, and that learning takes place both indoors and out. There is a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those that encourage children to make sensible choices. Records are kept well, although the notes of observations seen by the inspector did not indicate the next steps to be developed in learning. Assessments of Reception children at work are not always easy to manage because of the demands of the large majority of the class, who are in Years 1 and 2. Nonetheless, the class teacher is a skilled practitioner who manages the provision well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly appreciative of the school. One third of the questionnaires returned by parents and carers had comments appended, and the vast majority of these comments were positive. The strongest theme among the positive comments was appreciation of the work of the school in general and the headteacher in particular. A few of the comments were negative, and most of these related to lack of challenge for children in lessons. Inspection evidence fully supports the positive views and suggests that the negative views expressed are sometimes justified.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Easton Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	81	9	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	75	12	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	33	31	65	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	40	28	58	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	63	17	35	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	31	32	67	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	50	24	50	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	16	33	30	63	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	50	21	44	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	40	26	54	0	0	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	60	17	35	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	73	12	25	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	77	10	21	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 October 2009

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. I really enjoyed meeting you. Now I am writing to let you know what I found out.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that the school is doing right and some things that need to be improved. I know that all the adults who help to run your school want it to be a good school. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work.

I was impressed by your good behaviour and the way you get on well with one another. Your teachers teach you well and plan lots of interesting things for you to do. I particularly enjoyed looking at the photographs of A Midsummer Night's Dream that you performed last term. You looked as though you really enjoyed it, even though it rained! Many of you told me that you feel safe at school. This is because the adults take good care of you. You also told me that you really like the extra activities provided for you at lunch time or after school. I think that these are good. I also think that your headteacher is doing a good job in improving your school.

To help you to make better progress in your work, I have asked your teachers to try to make sure that every lesson really makes you think hard. I am sure that you are ready for this challenge! I would also like your teachers to make sure that when they mark your work, they always give you clear ideas about what you need to do next to improve. I would like you to help by making sure that you do what your teachers suggest. Your school keeps careful checks on how well you are getting on, and the information that the teachers gather is all kept on big sheets of paper. Sometimes it is difficult for your headteacher to find the information she needs quickly and easily. So I think that it is time that the school put this information on to a computer to help make your headteacher's job easier.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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