

# Ecton Village Primary School

West Street, Ecton, Northampton, NN6 0QF

**Inspection dates** 27-28 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment and progress in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics by the end of each key stage.
- Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make outstanding progress because of the effective teaching and small class sizes.
- Good teaching ensures that learning is effective in the small classes. Teachers generally plan tasks which are engaging and challenging.
- The highly effective support for pupils from a Traveller, Romany and Gypsy background ensures that many make outstanding progress.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- Leadership and management are good. Rigorous systems are in place to check on the effectiveness of teaching and decisive action has been taken to reduce less effective teaching.
- The governing body is knowledgeable and uses its expertise well to hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- The vision, drive and determination of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, ensures that the school has a good capacity to go on improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their writing skills in all subjects.
- Teachers' lesson planning does not always take account of pupils' different ages and abilities in the same class.
- In Reception, planning for outdoor learning is not always detailed enough and some activities do not sufficiently enable children to learn independently of adults.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons of which two were joint observations involving the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and the headteacher and staff.
- There was a discussion on the telephone with a representative of the local authority about the support and advice provided for the school.
- No responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available by the end of the inspection. The inspector sought the views of parents and carers as they arrived at school and at the Autumn Fair.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including: the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and safeguarding records.

## Inspection team

Joseph Peacock, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school and only 10% of pupils live in the village; the rest travel from nearby Northampton.
- There are three mixed-aged classes in the school and currently no pupils in Year 5.
- About 20% of pupils are from a Traveller, Romany or Gypsy background and nearly all the others pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are identified as disabled or as having special educational needs; all have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils at school action and school action plus is above average. There are currently no pupils with statements of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the time of the previous inspection, the headteacher has become class-based for two days each week and there are new teachers in the other two classes.
- The Acorns pre-school is managed by the school's governing body and is open every morning in the school hall. This setting is inspected separately.

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

- In the Early years Foundation Stage, improve planning to ensure that there is a closer link between indoor and outdoor learning and provide children with increased challenge in their independent activities.
- Raise attainment in writing throughout the school by;
  - planning more opportunities for pupils to write in literacy sessions and other subjects
  - ensuring that teachers match work more closely to the age and ability of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- It is difficult to assess the overall attainment on entry to school because of the small number of children who start in Reception each year. However, the proportion who are well below the levels expected for their age has increased since the last inspection and accounts for about half of the intake this year.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception Year and enjoy learning in the well-organised indoor and two outdoor learning areas. As a result, most make good progress in all areas of learning with many attaining the skills expected by the time they enter Year 1.
- The teaching of early reading skills is effective in the Reception Year as children are taught letters and their sounds (phonics) daily. However, whole-class phonics sessions which include Year 1 pupils mean that work is not always matched closely enough to the age or ability of the children. Early writing skills are not as well developed as other areas of learning and some activities, such as painting, lack direction. When children are not sufficiently challenged by independent activities, their concentration does not last for long.
- Skilled teaching assistants working with Reception children very effectively support and enhance learning with small groups as they tackle new work in this mixed-aged class.
- Pupils' good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2 because of effective teaching and pupils' positive attitudes to school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs thrive in the supportive learning environment and make at least good progress. School action and school action plus pupils achieve well because they are supported so effectively by staff in the small classes.
- Provision for those entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium is effective and their progress accelerates even more in Year 6 as the result of focused support. Traveller, Romany and Gypsy pupils are fully integrated in all classes and staff expertise built up over time ensures that most make excellent progress.
- Comparing attainment to national averages by the end of Year 6 is problematic because of the very small numbers. There were only four pupils in Year 6 last year and there are three this year. School data show that pupils generally do better in reading and mathematics than in writing at the end of each key stage. Reading is taught well throughout the school and keenly supported by parents and carers at home.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good, ensuring that most pupils achieve well. Decisive action to improve teaching by the headteacher and governing body has ensured that teaching and learning in most lessons are good.
- Teachers mostly have high expectations of what pupils can do, leading to pupils developing excellent attitudes to learning, and ensuring that lessons are challenging and generally well-planned. Pupils enjoy practical lessons, such as following written instructions to cook burgers and chips for lunch or measuring how much can be absorbed using a paper towel.
- The support provided by the school's skilled teaching assistants is highly effective, particularly for those who need additional help with new work. Additional funding is used wisely and well to support those entitled to the pupil premium.

- Assessment is accurate and the information it provides is used well most of the time to plan relevant tasks for pupils of different ages and abilities. Marking is thorough and detailed; comments show clearly how pupils can improve their work.
- Teaching and learning are not as effective as they should be in those lessons where all pupils are set the same work to do. Year 4 and Year 6 pupils, for example, used laptop computers to input data onto spreadsheets and all progressed at the pace of the slowest.
- Teaching programmes generally meet the needs of all groups of pupils well, promoting good achievement and developing skills effectively in literacy and numeracy. However, there are too few opportunities for writing in literacy sessions and in other subjects. As a result, pupils are not developing their writing skills quickly enough.
- Homework is set each week and supported well by parents and carers. Where appropriate, the school also provides work to be completed at home for pupils who are unable to attend school due to their medical condition.
- There is a good range of after-school clubs in sport, French, film and music that contribute well to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next phase in their education. 'No child left behind' is the school's apt motto. All parents and carers met during the inspection were appreciative of all that the school provides for their children and the good progress that they make.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' behaviour is good. It is not judged more highly because some pupils lose their concentration when tasks are not sufficiently challenging to hold their interest.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and enjoy coming to school. There is a delightful family atmosphere within the school, with older pupils caring for younger ones.
- There have been no permanent and very few fixed-term exclusions since the previous inspection.
- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as making racist comments and name-calling. All those spoken to say that bullying in any form rarely happens and that staff always deal quickly with any occurrence.
- Behaviour is consistently well managed and any cases of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively. Pupils are confident that the staff will look after them if they have any concerns. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and deals effectively with bullying.
- Attendance is average and improving. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to increase attendance and reduce persistent absences.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has accurately identified aspects of staff performance that needed to be addressed and, through leading by example, brought about improvements in teaching that have resulted in pupils making good progress.
- Effective management structures ensure that the small staff team share responsibilities. All staff check standards termly and are involved with members of the governing body in

carefully evaluating the quality of teaching and learning each term.

- The local authority has provided good support for the headteacher, enabling emerging issues to be resolved quickly. The support and advice continues to be readily available. It has resulted in more consistently good teaching and pupils making good progress.
- The school does all it can to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed and refuses to accept discrimination of any kind. The effectiveness of their policy and practice is demonstrated in the successful integration of pupils from Traveller, Romany and Gypsy backgrounds.
- The school works well with parents and carers and keeps them well informed through the *Ecton Buzz* newsletter and informative school website. There was a particularly good turnout for the Autumn Fair during the inspection, showing how keen parents and carers are to support the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is effective, as members of the governing body bring a wide range of relevant expertise to their role
- manages financial resources well
- works closely together to evaluate the school's effectiveness and hold leaders to account
- ensures that all statutory requirements relating to safeguarding are met.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	121818
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402053

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	57
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Justine Leggett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Esther McIntosh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 409213
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 409213
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