

# Eastbury Farm Primary School

Bishops Avenue, Northwood, Hertfordshire, HA6 3DG

## Inspection dates

23–24 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes in leadership. This has limited leaders' effectiveness in driving forward school improvement over the course of the last academic year.
- Governors are not yet effective in challenging school leaders to ensure that all pupils make good progress from their starting points. As a result, governors do not rigorously hold leaders to account for the school's performance.
- Leaders do not analyse assessment information precisely enough. This means that interventions have not been targeted appropriately so that support can be given to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could.
- Teachers do not use what they know pupils can do to inform their planning so that all pupils can make at least expected progress from their starting points. This is particularly so for disadvantaged pupils and the most able pupils in reading, writing and maths.
- The teaching of science, geography and history is too variable across all year groups.
- A large proportion of parents who responded on Parent View are concerned about the stability of the leadership team and the future provision for their children.
- Some teaching assistants are not used effectively to ensure that they are effective enough in helping pupils to achieve well.

### The school has the following strengths

- The deputy headteacher has been a consistent, stable force in a time of instability for the school. She is resilient and is managing the various challenges commendably to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the work of the school.
- Pupils are well cared for and arrangements for keeping them safe are effective. Pupils are happy, polite and respectful and are proud of their school. Pupils believe the school prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils enjoy talking about their reading and are able to use their phonic knowledge and skills well.
- Children in the early years have a good start to their school life and leave Reception ready for Year 1.

## Full report

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

- Leaders should further develop the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - they use pupil achievement information more precisely to improve outcomes for all pupils from their varying starting points in reading, writing and mathematics
  - teachers are consistently using what they know about the pupils to inform their practice so that pupils make at least good progress from their starting points
  - pupils' have regular opportunities to apply and consolidate their learning in subjects such as science, history and geography
  - teaching assistants are always used effectively to support pupils' learning by making sure they receive appropriate support so they understand what they need to do in each lesson to help pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Governors should continue their work with leaders and the local authority to secure stability in leadership and management, eliminating vulnerability or decline in the effectiveness of leadership by:
  - rigorously holding leaders to account for the school's performance so that pupils make rapid progress from their starting points
  - gaining the confidence and support of parents as they bring about these changes.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that the performance of groups of pupils has had a high enough priority. As a result, disadvantaged and most-able pupils do not always make the progress they should.
- Although leaders are working diligently to improve teaching, they do not make effective use of assessment information about pupils' achievements in reading, writing and mathematics. As a consequence, not all pupils make as much progress as they could.
- The use of pupil premium funding is not being monitored effectively. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who made expected progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 was below the national average.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop extended writing for different purposes across a range of subjects. However, these chances are more limited in subjects such as science, geography and history, which are taught less consistently across the school.
- School leaders are only just beginning to track pupils' attendance and raise awareness of the need for pupils to attend school every day. This lack of monitoring has allowed an increase in absence for vulnerable pupils, for example those pupils eligible for free school meals, to go unnoticed.
- The school uses sport premium funding well to offer a range of different sporting activities and events. The school's sports partnership provides pupils with many opportunities to participate more widely in local school competitions. As a result, pupils are able to talk about the health benefits of participating in physical education (PE) as well as the enjoyment of taking part in team games. Through team games, pupils have developed a sense of equality. Pupils say they like the fact boys and girls can participate in all sports regardless of gender.
- The school has benefited from support from the local authority working with advisers to improve practice, for example developing a consistent approach to writing across the school. The English lead has delivered a number of workshops to all teaching staff, alongside advisers. This has helped to develop teachers' subject knowledge and ensures consistency in the teaching of English. Early indications show that the teaching of writing is improving for most year groups and clear progress is evident in pupils' work in their books since the start of the school year.
- The mathematics lead has made a good start in addressing the school's priorities. It is evident from pupils' work that, in some lessons, teachers purposefully plan activities to extend pupils' learning in mathematics. Where this is the case, pupils are making the progress they should.
- There is a strong sense of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding within the school. Pupils say they want to learn about different cultures and faiths and many pupils choose to attend the school's extra-curricular French club.
- The teaching of British values is promoted through the school's vision and values. Pupils learn about mutual respect, and whole-school and class assemblies give time for

reflection and celebrate positive attitudes and personal responsibility. Pupils value receiving certificates for the work they do as pupil mentors to support new pupils to the school.

- The inclusion leader ensures the smooth transition for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She coordinates training for teachers and support staff, visits pre-school settings and involves parents in the early stages of transition. By doing so, she ensures that pupils are ready for the next phase of their learning. As a result, most pupils make at least expected progress.
- While parents are concerned about leadership instability, there is overwhelming support for the existing staff. As one pupil said, 'The teachers and parents work hard together to create a community atmosphere. I am very happy with this school, despite the recent disruption with a lack of headteacher.'

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body is not effective in holding the school's leaders to account. Governors have not challenged leaders sufficiently about pupils' performance.
- Despite governors' unwavering commitment to the school, some do not yet have a full understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across different year groups and subjects, and the impact this has on the school's performance information. Minutes of governors' meetings and discussions between the inspection team and governors show that governors do not challenge school leaders regularly enough on the information they are given to check its validity.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school carries out appropriate checks on those appointed to work at the school. Leaders ensure that staff undertake regular training to ensure that their knowledge of child protection procedures is up to date. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding and child protection. Pupils told inspectors during the inspection that they feel safe in school and the large majority of parents who completed the Ofsted questionnaire also agreed that their child is safe in school.
- All staff receive training in aspects of in the 'Prevent' duty so that they know how to raise any concerns they have about pupils and are able to spot signs of radicalisation.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Overall, teaching is too variable across the school. Consequently, some pupils are not learning consistently well in reading, writing and mathematics. Where teaching is better, pupils make at least expected progress. However, too few pupils make more than expected progress.
- There is not enough evidence to demonstrate that pupils have regular opportunities to apply their learning in subjects such as science, history and geography. Therefore, learning experiences to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects are limited. For example, pupils write about their science investigations, however they

do not always carry out practical investigation work that informs their writing.

- The quality and impact of additional adults employed to support learning are too variable. At times, they are not always deployed to best effect. In some instances, support staff are too slow to intervene, missing opportunities to support pupils who need to make accelerated progress.
- In most year groups, teachers' feedback on pupils' work helps pupils consolidate their understanding by providing opportunities to redraft aspects of writing or apply a different calculation method in mathematics. However, not all staff consistently follow the school's marking and feedback policy.
- Where learning is stronger, pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas and articulate their answers. Teachers use precise questioning to ascertain pupils' understanding and use clear examples to set expectations.
- The teaching of phonics is strong and has been so for the last three years. This has had a positive impact on achievement in reading. Pupils across the school, who inspectors listened to read, are confident and fluent readers. Younger pupils are able to use their phonic skills appropriately and self-correct well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are being supported well by some teachers and additional adults. Support staff complete specific training, such as speech language and communication, enabling the majority to make at least expected progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have created a supportive and safe environment for pupils to learn. There is a 'can do' attitude among the pupils. They talk positively about their teachers and the way they are encouraged to 'always do their best'. One pupil said, 'At first when I try something, I find it hard, but when I finish it I know that I can do even better.' Pupils acknowledge that, 'You try things you don't normally do, then you do it and you really like it.'
- Pupils are aspirational and believe that they can be whatever they want to be if they try hard enough. One pupil announced that she loved everything so much she was not sure whether she would be an archaeologist or a violinist.
- The school works with a mentoring programme which develops existing pupils to become mentors. Pupils are trained to support the new pupils who start at the school, many who have attended several schools prior to their arrival at Eastbury Farm. As a result, new pupils settle very quickly and feel safe and included.
- School assembly themes take into account the proportion of pupils who join and leave the school. In a key stage 1 assembly, pupils were reflective about what it means to be in a welcoming school and how important it is for all pupils to feel safe and supported. The school buddying system is valued among all the pupils. They talk about the role with pride and a great sense of responsibility.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, both in the community and when using the internet and social media at home. Pupils could talk about e-safety and the need to keep passwords private.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school's 'Golden rules' and behaviour policy set high expectations for behaviour that are clearly defined and understood by pupils. All staff who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree that behaviour is good, as do the majority of parents.
- Pupils are happy to talk about school life and are extremely positive about what the school provides for them. They are polite and respectful and have an enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils enjoy the responsibility and privilege of being a house captain or a member of the school council. They say they like 'the democracy and the opportunity to govern their school'.
- Pupils listen carefully and engage in discussions when appropriate. Occasionally, when activities do not match the needs of all pupils, learning slows.
- Although overall attendance is above the national average, the attendance for some vulnerable groups is not so strong. Leaders are now tracking more closely and celebrating good attendance with certificates.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because too few pupils, particularly the most able, make more than expected progress in reading, writing and maths from their varying starting points.
- The proportion of pupils achieving expected progress or more than expected progress in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6 is below the national average.
- In 2016 for reading, writing and mathematics, the proportion of most-able and disadvantaged pupils who made expected progress from their varying starting points in Year 6 is below the national average.
- Because the consistency of teaching and learning of subjects, such as science, history and geography, is variable across year groups, outcomes in these subjects are not strong.
- Pupils make good progress in learning phonics. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check, has been above the national average for the last three years.
- Children in the early years achieve a good level of development by the time they leave Reception. Children are taught well and learn quickly. By the time they get to key stage 1, they have a good understanding of reading, writing, numbers and phonics.

## Early years provision

Good

- Most children start in the Nursery and Reception class with skills that are typically average for their age. They make good progress from their starting points due to effective teaching and a well-planned curriculum that supports children's achievement well.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is above the national average, which ensures that they are well prepared for entry into Year 1.
- The early years leader works with the Nursery teacher to ensure that planning is consistent. Smooth processes for transition from Nursery to Reception ensure that children quickly develop good behaviours for learning. Pupils learn well together and independently through well-planned activities.
- Early years provision ensures that children have a good start to reading and writing. A consistent, structured programme of phonics teaching across Reception classes ensures that children have regular opportunities to practice these skills through reading and writing. As a result, children in the early years make good progress in reading, writing and phonics.
- Parents play an important part in their children's learning. They are welcomed into the classroom and are encouraged to play a full part in their child's learning. The home-school communication ensures that, not only are parents well informed, but teachers get to know individual children very well and are able to plan specific activities that help children to make progress quickly.
- The early years learning environment has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is able to meet the range of interests and abilities of the children. It is well equipped. Resources are inviting and are easily accessible for all children. For example, there is now a wide range of activities to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy. As a result, children's achievement in reading and mathematics is above the national average and the children are independent and confident in trying out new activities.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of how to use children's achievement information to ensure that all children make progress. She analyses the children's starting points and plans learning to meet their needs. For example, she identified that a large proportion of pupils were starting Reception with a need to develop personal, social and emotional aspects of learning. This is now a focus and features highly when planning activities.
- Much consideration is given to ensure that learning themes link. For example, the doctor's surgery area in the classroom includes books on the anatomy, a model of teeth and tooth brushes. Children are able to make links to their prior learning and consequently, deepen their understanding.
- Learning journeys are well presented and informative. Observations are detailed and comments refer to achievement against the early learning goals. Inspection evidence confirms that it is clear to see progression from the beginning of term and each child's

next steps in their learning.

- Children in early years have weekly opportunities to experience outdoor learning through the forest school's activities. This has had a positive impact on boys' literacy. For example, one child was fully engaged in making stick people. Precise adult questioning enabled the child to verbalise and link the stick man to the topic of the human body.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and apply them well. Children are safe and happy in the setting.

## School details

Unique reference number	117245
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10022972

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	334
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Ralph Sangster
Headteacher	Baljit Ahluwalia
Telephone number	01923 824543
Website	<a href="http://www.eastburyfarm.herts.sch.uk">www.eastburyfarm.herts.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@eastburyfarm.herts.sch.uk">admin@eastburyfarm.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Eastbury Farm is larger than the average-sized primary school. It admits 45 children per year into the Reception class and this means that there are mixed-age classes throughout the school.
- Children enter the Nursery part time in the September after their third birthday. Children enter the Reception Year full time in the September after their fourth birthday.
- Fewer pupils than the national average are eligible for additional pupil premium funding. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. White British pupils form the largest ethnic group. About a third of

pupils are Asian or British Asian.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school accommodates children of service personnel who frequently join and leave the school. As a result, the stability of the school's population is much lower when compared to most primary schools.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning across all year groups.
- Some observations of learning were carried out jointly with school leaders
- The lead inspector held meetings with governors, representatives from the local authority and school staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, information on pupils' attainment and progress, curriculum planning, records of behaviour and safety. They also scrutinised the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers' performance, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and the school's website.
- Discussions were held with a group of pupils and informal conversations took place during lesson times and in the playground.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- The inspector took account of 124 responses to the online parental questionnaire (Parent View) and text responses from parents and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- The questionnaires completed by 17 members of staff were also considered.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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