

Eastbury Farm Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117245
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338976
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ivor Kyte
Headteacher	Patricia Young
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. All 17 class teachers and classes were seen and 18 lessons or part lessons were observed. In addition, brief observations were made of pupils' learning across the school. Meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at range of documentation associated with safeguarding, the school improvement plan and scrutinised 110 questionnaires returned by pupils, and 134 by parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's procedures to judge its overall performance.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Approximately 40% of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is higher than average. A very small number of pupils are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A small minority of parents are service personnel who often move on after their tour of duty has finished. This means that the school roll is not as stable as is generally seen. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes for much of the time and in a variety of groupings for mathematics and English. The school has gained Healthy Schools status and an Activemark for its work in physical education. The current headteacher has been in post approximately 18 months.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Pupils are very keen to succeed and want to do well. They show high levels of concentration, involvement and enjoyment in their lessons. Pupils' aspirations and those of their parents are more than matched by the staff's high aspirations for the pupils in their care. This is reflected in the consistency of high quality, very often outstanding teaching; the rich, exciting yet rigorous curriculum and the school's excellent care, guidance and support. The result is that pupils make excellent progress and attain high standards academically and in their personal development. The school has an extremely positive ethos. Pupils are rightly proud of the school and value highly the opportunities that it provides.

Pupils are very confident, highly articulate and the school is a very friendly, inclusive and cohesive community. Pupils' behaviour is excellent so that they engage intellectually at a high level in lessons. They feel extremely safe in school because they are confident that the headteacher or staff member will deal effectively with any problems. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and know the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

While maintaining its very high standards, the school has continued to improve since the last inspection, particularly in the development of its creative approaches to the curriculum. Given this track record, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. Essentially this is because the school's senior leadership team is extremely strong. The headteacher, relatively new in post, has introduced more devolved leadership and staff have responded particularly well to the challenges and their enhanced responsibilities. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work extremely well together. The result of excellent leadership at all levels is that the school knows its strengths and weakness extremely well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, although governors currently do not contribute as much as they could to this process. A small minority of parents lack confidence in the school's leadership and the impact of its work on the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that governors make a greater contribution to the school's process of the school's self-evaluation.
- Improve the two-way communication between school and parents, building on the support of the large majority of parents, so that all parents are confident in the school's leadership and its impact on the work of the school.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils make consistently good and often outstanding progress in lessons and over time. They show impressive attitudes and high levels of engagement, for example, bouncing ideas off each other with excitement and responding readily to questions with extended answers. They focus on the task in hand and work effectively, independently and in groups. Pupils want to do well; they respond extremely positively to the challenges teachers give them so that they get through a lot of work.

Historical and current standards by the end of Year 6 are high. There is no discernable difference between boys' and girls' performance in class with both performing well above the national average for their particular gender in last year's national tests. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively so that the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 is significantly above the national average. Pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds do equally well. Pupils with English as an additional language make excellent progress in learning English. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because of the high quality support that they receive.

Pupils are mature and extremely pleasant so that they are welcoming, friendly and keen to talk about the school and their achievements. Their compassion is evident in their charity fundraising and their empathy is reflected in their high quality writing, for example 'The Piano' where they showed sensitive insights into the character they created. Because their views are listened to, they have a very strong voice in the running of the school through the school council, and they take their various other responsibilities very seriously. Given their high standards of personal development and their absorption of the school's values, such as developing respect for others, coupled with their high academic achievement, and opportunities to show enterprise in such exercises as 'making your money grow', pupils are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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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Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is outstanding and it is never less than good. Teaching is characterised by extremely high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge so that they are able to respond to the pupils and develop the depth of their thinking through carefully targeted questioning. They are also very clear what it is they want pupils to learn in a particular lesson and lessons are conducted at a cracking pace with excellent use made of partner work to allow pupils to rehearse and extend their ideas. Teaching assistants are very skilled; there is strong teamwork with teachers so they are effectively used in lessons to provide excellent support.

All pupils identified in their questionnaire that they knew how to improve their work. Marking is generally of a very high quality, although some parents are not clear about the school's marking policy. Marking identifies the next steps and it sets focused targets. Teachers check understanding thoroughly during the course of a lesson and there is often high quality one-to-one dialogue between the teacher and the pupil to stimulate further thought. There is very close tracking of pupils' progress so that issues are identified early through the periodic progress meetings. These in turn identify not only the specific support needed for individual pupils to enable them to get back on track but also feed the information into the school's self-evaluation.

The curriculum provides rich stimulating experiences and is constantly being refined and developed. Standards are high because of it. Creative links are established between subjects and provide very good contexts for developing essential skills. For example, older pupils' work on rivers provides opportunities for high quality work on erosion reflecting a depth and rigour in pupils' engagement in the theme. Enrichment is strong through trips, visitors and themed weeks. The school uses a flexible approach to grouping pupils in mathematics and English so that it can support or challenge specific groups of pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is mapped carefully to ensure that it is fully effective. The excellent personal, social and health education programme helps to bring out the best in the pupils.

Underpinning the school's excellent provision is the fact that pupils are known and valued as individuals. Because there are excellent relationships between adults and

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pupils, staff are vigilant and quick to pick up possible issues and to target additional support. There are highly effective relationships with outside agencies to provide and extend pupils' learning opportunities or for the school to turn to for additional help.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Teamwork across the school is very strong. Staff share the headteacher's commitment to the pupils. Morale is high and there is a professional culture, which means that staff are open, share skills and provide very good support to each other. Providing opportunities for staff members to develop their professional skills is given high priority. There is rigorous and extensive monitoring of the quality of teaching and new staff are quickly absorbed into the school's ethos of high professional expectations. The school has an accurate perception of the quality of teaching. Year leaders are particularly effective in ensuring that there is mutual support, joint and shared planning and that pupils have common curriculum experiences. Subject leaders are also very effective and engage in regular scrutiny of pupils' work.

Governors have ensured that the school's very high standards have been maintained. Their work shows recent improvement in its systematic approach to ensuring they meet their responsibilities. Governors bring a wide range of personal and professional expertise and are supportive. The Chair of the Governing Body meets with the headteacher regularly to keep his 'finger on the pulse'. They also provide appropriate challenge, for example reviewing standards or relating to the setting of academic targets. Currently they are not as actively involved in the school's procedures for self-evaluation. Their view of their effectiveness as identified in the school self-evaluation is over generous. On the other hand, they take their role with regard to safeguarding and child protection extremely seriously and consequently the school's systems are particularly effective. The Eastbury Farm School Association is very active in developing the school community and raises considerable funds annually on behalf of the school.

The school is inclusive and promotes equal opportunities extremely well. Higher attaining pupils are challenged very effectively and pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities make excellent progress. The promotion of community cohesion is effective. It is based on its clear understanding of the nature of its community and is reflected in the very cohesive nature of the school community and the fact that pupils

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from differing backgrounds get on exceptionally well with each other. They also learn a significant amount from one another about their respective cultural and religious backgrounds. There are plans to develop the school's national and international links, for example building on the current links with a Nigerian school, in order to extend further pupils' experience of the diverse nature of our society and awareness of the wider world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

Children get a flying start to their school experience in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make excellent progress. They are enthusiastic learners and the high expectations that the school has of its pupils start here. Adults know the children very well; the learning environment in both the Nursery and Reception is very stimulating and staff provide very well planned experiences. Adult led activities are extremely effective, be it a physical education lesson in the hall with the youngest children reinforcing the theme of opposites, or, for example, the mathematical work on favourite colours in Reception. Children are given good opportunities to make their own choices and their curiosity, concentration, independence and imagination are developed and supported extremely well. Relationships are excellent and children's language fostered exceptionally successfully because the advantageous adult to child ratio means that adults spend a lot of time talking to the children. Detailed on-going assessment identifies the 'next steps'. The Reception class has moved to a single intake and recently reorganised. There are strong and effective links with parents and carers. Excellent leadership overall and in both settings is reflected in the strong teamwork of the adults, the inclusivity of the

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settings, the fact that the leadership thinks carefully about what needs to happen next to take things further and monitors children's progress carefully. The already good Reception outdoor area, for example, is identified for further development. The nursery classroom is in a temporary classroom somewhat isolated from the Reception class. Nevertheless, there are strong links between Nursery and Reception staff.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents were happy with their child's experiences at the school. A small minority expressed concerns about how the school was led and managed. The inspection findings do not substantiate these concerns but parents' negative perceptions need to be addressed to enable all parents have confidence in the school's leadership.

One or two parents wanted the school to do more work preparing pupils for 11+ and other secondary selection processes. Historically the school has not undertaken any of this work although early in this academic year it did some work familiarising pupils with the verbal reasoning tests adopted by most local secondary schools.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eastbury Farm Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery 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 inspection team received 134 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 339 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	60	51	38	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	51	64	48	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	45	55	42	15	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	37	67	50	11	8	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	66	49	58	43	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	39	61	46	14	10	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	45	64	48	2	1	2	1
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)	44	33	52	39	11	8	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	36	65	49	7	5	6	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	37	61	46	13	10	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	37	55	41	13	10	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	37	28	58	43	19	14	12	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	50	56	42	4	3	4	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Eastbury Farm Junior Mixed Infant and Nursery School, Northwood, HA6 3DG

On behalf of my colleagues, I would like to thank all of you for making us so welcome in your school. It clearly is a very special place and I know my colleagues really enjoyed the many conversations that they had with you. We were extremely impressed by your attitudes to learning and the quality of your work. I would like to share our findings with you.

This is an outstanding school. You attain extremely high standards both in your work and in the way you develop as young people. Your behaviour, attitudes to learning and each other, confidence and general maturity are impressive. All staff care about you a great deal and ensure that you aim high in everything that you do. Your teachers are all highly skilled and ensure that you make excellent progress. You have many varied, rich experiences at school, which really involve and challenge you.

I have asked the school's leadership team to do two things to help the school improve even more. The governors take responsibility for keeping a watching brief over the school. I have asked that they become more involved in the processes of judging just how effective the school is. I have also asked the school's leadership team to work at improving the two-way communication with parents and carers. Almost all parents and carers are happy with your experiences at the school but some have expressed concern about the school's leadership and about a number of changes that have been made. I know from your questionnaire that almost all of you thought that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job but it is very important that all parents and others share your confidence.

I am sure that the school will carry on improving and developing and that you will continue to play a very important part in that process.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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