

Eastbury Primary School

Dawson Avenue, Barking, IG11 9QQ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although achievement is improving well overall, pupils' progress varies across year groups and is not as strong in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- This is because teaching does not have a consistently good impact on pupils' learning. Writing tasks sometimes fail to capture pupils' enthusiasm. Not all teachers are quick to spot when pupils are struggling or finding work too easy.
- Pupils are interested in learning and respond positively to their teachers. However, in lessons they can be passive listeners, rather than active participants. They usually behave well and say they feel safe at school, but there are a few instances of over-boisterous behaviour at break times.
- The governing body does not play a strong enough part in shaping the school's strategic direction and driving improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- There is a clear sense of purpose. The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully galvanised the enthusiasm of staff and there is a shared determination at all levels to strive to become a good school.
- Leaders' efforts have led to improvements in teaching, and as a consequence attainment is rising. All groups of pupils are making up for previous underachievement and are narrowing the gaps on what is expected for their age.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with no notice.
- The inspection team observed 26 parts of lessons taught by 26 different teachers. They listened to pupils reading and talked with groups of pupils about their work and their experiences of school. They observed and spoke with pupils at break and lunch times, and at breakfast club.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior staff, a group of middle leaders, the coordinator of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and a group of teachers. They also met the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors spoke informally with parents and carers.
- A range of documents, including the school’s assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school’s plan for improvement, monitoring files, records of incidents and the single record of recruitment and vetting checks, was scrutinised.
- Account was taken of the responses in 33 questionnaires completed by members of staff. There were no recorded responses on the Parent View site.

Inspection team

Linda McGill, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Kekshan Salaria

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Juliet Ward

Additional inspector

Olson Davis

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Eastbury is much larger than a typical primary school. It serves an ethnically diverse community. About a fifth of the pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder come from a wide range of backgrounds, the largest of which are those of Black African, Other White, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage. Two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language and over 40 languages are spoken.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is smaller than the national figure at 7%. A similar proportion is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs, which is in line with what is found nationally. About a third of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium and this is substantially greater than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- In 2011, the school's results in national tests for eleven-year-olds met the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for attainment and progress.
- The school's intake is increasing year-on-year as it expands to accommodate four classes in each year group. Seven newly qualified teachers joined the school at the start of this academic year.
- Since November 2010, the school has been led by an advisory headteacher from the local authority. She will remain at the school at least until the end of this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013 ensure that all teaching is good and a growing proportion is outstanding, by:
 - making sure teachers check frequently during lessons whether pupils have understood what they are learning, and take swift steps to ensure no-one marks time or struggles for too long
 - supporting teachers to use assessment information to help them prepare tasks and activities that are closely matched to pupils' learning needs
 - ensuring teachers expect pupils to be active participants in lessons, encourage pupils to contribute to discussions and allow them sufficient time to complete their tasks
 - enabling teachers to observe and learn from one another
 - checking that all teachers follow the school's agreed procedures, for example for marking and feedback to pupils.
- Take steps to ensure pupils' progress in writing matches that in reading and mathematics, by:
 - analysing samples of pupils' written work to see where pupils do well and where they need further support
 - providing pupils with opportunities to write in relevant and meaningful contexts in different subjects
 - providing more writing activities that stimulate pupils' imaginations and ignite their enthusiasm, for example through drama and dialogue.
- Strengthen leadership and management, and in particular governance, by:
 - implementing plans to review the organisation and structure of the governing body and to ensure that its members have the necessary skills and expertise to contribute fully to the drive for improvement
 - sharpening up the targets in the school's plan for improvement so that they map out clearly what must be achieved if the school's effectiveness is to become good
 - further developing the skills of middle leaders so that they play a stronger part in driving improvements in teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The unvalidated results of this year's national tests and assessments for eleven-year-olds are a marked improvement on those of 2011, and are close to the national figures. There was also a substantial improvement in outcomes at the end of Year 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. All groups of pupils across the school have narrowed the gap on what is expected for their age, as a result of higher expectations and better teaching. Current work in pupils' books confirms this. Some variations across year groups remain, because teaching is not consistently good.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated considerably in reading and mathematics, but requires improvement in writing. Pupils make progress in writing at a steady rate and this means that fewer pupils reach higher than expected levels. Taken overall, the progress made by last year's Year 6 across Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics matched that of pupils nationally.
- There are no significant variations in the performance of different groups of pupils. In the past, all groups underachieved substantially; boosting the achievement of all pupils is a major priority for the school. The progress of individuals and groups is carefully tracked and swift steps taken to make sure no-one falls behind. Extra support is carefully targeted and has led to some marked improvements. For example, the systematic teaching of letters and sounds, additional 'reading recovery' support and the high profile given to reading has led to rapid improvement. Pupils speak enthusiastically about the books they are reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates, as do those who are eligible for the pupil premium. The substantial proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress. The school's emphasis on boosting speaking and listening skills has had a positive impact.
- When they start school, children's knowledge and skills are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in their social and language skills. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage successfully create a supportive environment which enables children to settle in quickly, develop social skills and become confident learners.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Currently, there is not enough good teaching to ensure that all pupils make accelerated progress in all classes in all subjects. There is, however, a secure core of good teaching and the school is well placed to share good practice from within.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave and respond in lessons. Occasionally, they control pupils too tightly and tend to dominate discussions, which restrict the chances pupils have to contribute to debates or to complete their work. All teachers emphasise the development of speaking and listening skills in lessons, and encourage pupils to talk with their partners about their work, but not all are equally skilled at this; some 'partner talk' is perfunctory and does not add to learning.
- Teachers use technology effectively to enhance their teaching and classrooms are well-organised and attractive learning environments. They plan in year group teams to ensure that all pupils have the same experiences. However, there are some variations in the way that plans are implemented.
- There are other inconsistencies that mean that the impact that teachers have on pupils' learning is not maximised. For example, teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but do not always point out where improvements could be made and not all make sure that the comments or suggestions are followed up by the pupils. Some teachers are not as skilled as others at spotting when pupils are struggling or when tasks are too easy, which slows the pace of learning. Sometimes, assessment information is not used well enough to ensure tasks are adapted sufficiently to meet individual needs.
- Support and training have helped teachers develop their skills and subject knowledge in the

teaching of reading and mathematics, which has boosted pupils' progress. The same is rightly planned for writing. Currently, too many writing tasks fail to capture pupils' enthusiasm, and comprehension exercises, for example, do little to foster a love of writing. However, where teachers use more stimulating methods such as drama, role play and discussion as a preamble to writing, pupils write willingly and with interest.

- The impact of the work of teaching assistants is also variable. At best, such as in a religious education lesson about the festival of Diwali, teaching assistants lead discussions confidently and skilfully. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, nursery nurses and assistants play a full part in guiding children's learning. On occasions, teaching assistants focus on the completion of tasks rather than on what the pupils are supposed to be learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and they move quietly and calmly around the large school building. They are respectful to adults. Pupils are usually interested in learning, and they are particularly enthusiastic about reading. Behaviour is not good, however, because there are instances in lessons when pupils' attention wanders or when pupils are passive and compliant, rather than active and enthusiastic. There are also times when behaviour at break and lunch times is over boisterous, although the school's records show that such incidents are becoming less frequent. Pupils themselves said that behaviour has improved a good deal and that they feel safe at school.
- Pupils acknowledge that bullying does occur, although not often, but they are fully confident that staff will quickly sort out any problems. They understand about different kinds of bullying, mentioning 'anti-bullying day' and know that name-calling is hurtful.
- The breakfast club gives pupils a relaxed and sociable start to the day.
- There has been a marked improvement in attendance, which is now in line with the national average. This is as a result of greater challenge to parents and carers and rewards and incentives for pupils to improve their attendance.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The school is improving well as a result of the high expectations and decisive and resilient leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. The need to boost pupils' progress and to raise achievement is at the forefront of all that is done. This commitment is shared by staff at all levels. Everyone who returned a questionnaire agreed that they were proud to be a member of staff at Eastbury. Middle leaders are beginning to play a stronger part in driving improvement and promoting consistency, but their role is not yet fully developed.
- Leaders and governors clearly understand the school's strengths and areas for development. The plan of future work includes the most important aspects, for example, improving attainment in writing is high on the list of priorities. However, there are too few quantifiable targets within the plan, which means that progress towards the overarching aim of becoming a good school is not easy to check.
- Arrangements for evaluating and managing the performance of staff and holding them to account for pupils' progress are well established and effective. A well-planned, comprehensive programme of professional development that includes the judicious and appropriate use of consultants is tailored to individuals' needs ensures that teachers are supported in improving their practice. As a result, there is a secure core of good teaching and the school is well placed to bring about further improvements.
- The school's track record over the past two years indicates that there is a strong capacity for sustained improvement.
- Revisions to the curriculum have contributed to the rise in attainment in English and mathematics. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's emphasis on promoting social skills is particularly effective and pupils of all backgrounds get on well together. This is further enhanced by a

wide range of after-school activities; currently over 500 pupils participate. The improvements to the learning and progress of all groups of pupils illustrate clearly the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

- The involvement of parents and carers in all aspects of school life is growing. During this inspection, many parents and carers attended informal meetings with their child's new class teacher. Every child who has started in the Nursery has been visited at home.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the teaching of mathematics and for teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge and consequently outcomes in both of these areas.

■ **The governance of the school: requires improvement**

- The governing body ensures that statutory requirements, such as those for keeping pupils safe, and for recruitment and vetting checks are fully met. It also makes sure that funding from the pupil premium is spent in supporting the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended, for example through the provision of breakfast and homework clubs and additional tuition in mathematics. This has helped to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as their peers.
 - The governing body's support for the school is not yet matched by sufficient challenge to senior leaders, and the governing body does not play a strong enough part in shaping the school's strategic direction. Roles and responsibilities are not explicit, and governors do not have regular first-hand experience of the school. This has been recognised and there are plans for a thorough review of the governing body's effectiveness and the skills and expertise of its members.
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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

Unique reference number	101189
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	407117

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	784
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Macleod
Headteacher	Carole Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	17–18 November 2011
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