

Inspection of Ecton Village Primary Academy

West Street, Ecton, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN6 0QF

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Ecton Village Primary Academy. They said that they feel happy and safe. One pupil spoke for many when they said, 'This is a great community. Even though we are a small school – we are a big family!'

The school is calm. Learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils cooperate and enjoy playtime together. They skip, hoopla, draw, climb and play football. Older children look after the younger ones. Pupils said that bullying is rare. Should anyone be unkind, they said that this would quickly be sorted out by their teachers.

Teachers are ambitious for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective and caring support. In lessons, teachers skilfully adapt the learning to ensure that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Parents of pupils with SEND are particularly complimentary about the high level of care that their child receives. Parents said that they had 'struck gold' in their choice of school.

Although last year's published outcomes were a disappointment, leaders have acted swiftly. The curriculum has been strengthened. Subject leadership is strong. Pupils are now much better prepared for their next learning stage.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The curriculum is ambitious and covers the scope of the national curriculum. The knowledge that pupils need to know is clearly identified. There are regular opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning and connect this to their new knowledge. Pupils' recall of their studies is impressive.

The curriculum in a minority of subjects is relatively new and needs time to embed.

Subject leaders have received high-quality leadership training and support from the trust. They lead their subjects well. In music, for example, the curriculum covers the technical, cultural and expressive features of music. Pupils' knowledge is carefully built upon over time. They can perform to a high level with accuracy and enthusiasm. Pupils said that they enjoy music and the many opportunities they receive to play an instrument and to sing.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They provide clear explanations. Pupils' misconceptions are quickly picked up. Teachers select appropriate activities that help pupils learn. For example, in science, they use prisms to separate white light.

In lessons, teachers use regular checks to ensure that pupils are learning as they should. In the early years, for example, adults work skilfully with children. They use assessment well. They explore children's thinking and help to extend their vocabulary. They create regular opportunities to test pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The phonics curriculum is well planned. It is taught consistently by well-trained staff. Pupils learn to read as soon as they enter the early years. They benefit from rich resources and books that match the sounds that they are learning. They regularly practise their reading in school and at home. Pupils who need it receive effective support to catch up with their peers. Pupils are motivated readers. They cannot wait to learn new sounds fluently and then move to their next book.

This is a 'reading school'. Pupils have access to high-quality books of different genres. They enjoy rhymes and poetry. Pupils show enthusiasm for reading. They said that having a book is like 'having a friend'.

The early years environment is purposeful. Resources are accessible to all children, including those of pre-school age. Activities are stimulating. Adults are attentive and patient. They listen carefully when children communicate their ideas. Leaders are aware that more work is needed to ensure further ambition in the vocabulary that children are taught. Plans are underway to address this.

Attendance of all pupils, including pupils with SEND, has improved. More pupils are now safe in school and learning. Effective strategies are in place to ensure that pupils attend school. However, pupils' attendance in this small school remains a priority for leaders.

Pupils benefit from a well-planned personal, social and health education curriculum that is age appropriate. They know how important it is to eat healthily and to exercise. They are aware of the dangers of being online. Pupils have a good understanding of democracy. The active school council works on behalf of their peers. They have a positive impact. At lunchtime, for example, instead of the chicken dinner always being served with gravy, pupils can now choose if they would like gravy or not!

Parents and staff are extremely complimentary about the leadership of the school. Some said that they would 'not know where they would be' without the support they receive. Staff appreciate the actions taken to support their work-life balance. They are extremely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a palpable culture of care within the school. Vulnerable pupils receive the support that they need, including from external agencies. Records are diligently kept.

Staff are vigilant. They are well trained. This means that they have the confidence to flag to leaders any 'nagging doubts'.

The school's single central record of staff meets statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in some subjects is only in its first year of implementation. As a result, further monitoring and evaluation are required to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum fully meet pupils' learning needs. Leaders should continue to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are fully embedded and that pupils are securing the knowledge, fluency and confidence they need across all the subjects studied.
- Despite leaders' efforts, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. They are missing a good quality of education. Leaders should continue their work to ensure more pupils attend school regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142400
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10254860
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Thallon
Principal	Kate Cleaver
Website	www.ectonvillageacademy.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- No pupils receive their education at alternative provision.
- The academy pre-school is integrated into the Reception class.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher to discuss their evaluation of the quality of education. She met with the chief executive officer of Hatton Academy Trust, the chair of the trust board and members.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at the curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of

pupils' work. Inspectors heard pupils read. They visited the early years provision.

- Inspectors observed pupils during lunchtime and playtime. They spoke to groups of pupils, including members of the school council.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, and deputy, to discuss the actions taken to keep children safe. She reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record of staff. She looked at information about the actions taken to protect the most vulnerable pupils. She reviewed information about pupils' attendance.
- The views of members of staff, pupils and parents were considered.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Emma Tayler

Ofsted Inspector

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