

Fowlmere Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110607
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356779
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Brooks
Headteacher	Mr R Elcock
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
School address	The Butts Fowlmere, Royston SG8 7SL
Telephone number	01763 208203
Fax number	01763 208119
Email address	office@fowlmere.cambs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Inspection number	356779

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw 4 teachers and 7 lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum and lesson plans, a range of school policies and records, and the 73 questionnaires returned by parents.

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

- boys' achievement in writing
- the progress made by Reception children who are taught in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class
- the rigour and effectiveness of the systems by which the school judges its own performance.

Information about the school

The large majority of pupils who attend this smaller than average primary school come from the immediate locality although a few travel from further afield. Most are from White British backgrounds with a small number coming from minority ethnic families. The proportion who come from homes where English is not the first language is well below average and very few of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. More pupils than average are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities although this proportion varies considerably in each year group. Most of those pupils identified have moderate learning difficulties. The school has won a number of awards in recent years, including the Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils are known as individuals and receive effective levels of support and encouragement. As a result, they grow into confident young learners who respect one another's views and opinions. Pupils' good behaviour has a positive impact on their learning. They are well motivated and enjoy coming to school, as their high levels of attendance show. They feel safe and well cared for. One pupil noted, 'Everyone here is really kind and caring. We are all treated equally and adults help us sort out any problems we might have.'

Pupils' achievement is good. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above and, in some years, well above average. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs progress as well as their peers because of the good levels of attention paid to tailoring the curriculum to their specific needs. Last year the school identified that pupils were not making enough progress in mathematics. This was successfully addressed by arranging focused teaching for individuals and specific groups to help them achieve their potential.

Teachers maintain pupils' attention and interest well by presenting stimulating lessons, which involve pupils practically in their learning. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learned about the process of mummification in Ancient Egypt, for instance, by 'performing' the different stages on a classmate. Pupils enjoy the wide range of experiences offered through the curriculum. They learn how to keep fit and healthy through regular physical education lessons, and also through the wide range of after-school sports offered by the school. The school is quick to identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties and seeks prompt support and advice from outside agencies. Assessment procedures have been strengthened recently, but pupils are not yet involved enough in setting their own targets for improvement and assessing their own learning.

The headteacher drives the school's work well and this ensures that it continues to improve. Careful analysis of assessment information, daily visits to classrooms and regular discussions with staff and pupils give him a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's leaders are aware that community cohesion, while satisfactory, is a weaker element of their work; some actions have been taken but, as yet, the pupils' understanding of communities, religions and beliefs outside their own experience is limited.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully raised the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who reach higher levels in the national tests. Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved and the gap between attainment in reading and writing has diminished. These improvements, together with the calm, effective leadership of the headteacher and strong support from the whole school community, mean that the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Involve pupils more effectively in their learning by encouraging them to set their own targets and assess their own progress during lessons.
- Improve community cohesion by:
 - developing meaningful links with schools and communities within the United Kingdom and globally
 - extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures, religions and beliefs other than their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children's skills vary considerably when they start in Reception but, overall, are typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the school. Girls and boys achieve well and thoroughly enjoy learning. Last year, boys did not progress as well as girls in writing and the school is addressing this successfully by ensuring that the subject matter in writing lessons is more appealing to boys' interests. Pupils are very keen to learn, and apply themselves well in lessons. They work well individually, in pairs and in small groups. In a literacy lesson in Years 5 and 6, for example, the pupils worked together to compose an opening sentence for a science fiction story. They shared their opinions thoughtfully and listened to one another's points of view. With the teacher's expert questioning, they were able to refine their sentences to provide a really tense and exciting opening. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties make especially good progress when they are supported by teaching assistants. They are encouraged to take a full part in lessons, often rehearsing their answers with assistants before offering their contributions.

The school's work to gain the Activemark award has helped pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, which most adopt. Regular swimming and physical education lessons help to increase their fitness levels. Pupils make a good contribution to their own school community, through their work as class councillors and playground monitors. They play an active role in the local community, presenting concerts and assemblies for parents, carers and friends and carol singing in the village at Christmas. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong but their understanding of different faiths and cultures is still developing.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

A wide range of activities is organised to make learning fun for pupils. Visits and visitors to the school add real excitement to pupils' learning. Pupils especially enjoyed a residential visit to Fairthorne Manor, which enabled them to attempt a variety of adventurous activities such as raft building. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument and many engage in the wide range of after-school clubs on offer. Subjects are linked to make learning more relevant and interesting for pupils. A literacy lesson on note-taking in a Year 3 and 4 class, for example, involved pupils using a search engine to find information about everyday life in ancient Egypt on the internet. The school is careful to teach pupils how to use the internet safely.

Pupils with moderate learning difficulties receive good teaching and high levels of care and attention. Their needs are carefully assessed and individual programmes implemented to help them learn successfully. Very good links with external support agencies ensure that specialist advice can be gained to help school staff meet pupils' individual needs effectively. Parents and carers really appreciate the support and care given to their children, one writing, 'My child has flourished as a result of constant, consistent support.'

Teachers have extremely positive relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour very well. They use a variety of strategies to maintain pupils' attention successfully, such as questioning, paired discussion and group work. They mark pupils' books regularly but do not always provide enough guidance for pupils about how to improve. Teachers always

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

make it clear to pupils what they are going to be learning during the lesson and what they have to do to achieve success and this is an effective way of harnessing their motivation and enthusiasm. However, they miss opportunities to motivate pupils still further by involving them in setting their own targets and reviewing their learning in lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a firm steer to the school's work, embedding ambition successfully amongst staff and driving improvement well. He provides an excellent example to staff in his day-to-day dealings with pupils, parents and carers. He consults with them regularly, taking their views, along with those of staff and governors, into account when planning future developments.

There are clear procedures to ensure that pupils are safe in school. Safeguarding policies and practices are appropriate, although not reviewed regularly enough to ensure their full effectiveness. Staff are properly trained in safeguarding and new staff checked carefully to ensure their suitability. Staff promote equality of opportunity well, checking carefully to see that all pupils, whatever their background or needs, make good progress. Racist incidents are rare, but procedures are in place to ensure that any which arise are tackled promptly.

Partnerships with parents and carers are very effective in helping them to become active partners in their children's education and development. Parents and carers value the approachability of the headteacher and staff, saying they are always available to answer any questions or concerns. They praise the 'commitment, energy and dedication' of all the school staff.

Governors are supportive and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. About half of the governors are relatively new and have yet to completely fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Nonetheless, the chair has established useful procedures to help to monitor the work of the school, although some of these are not formal enough to ensure that governors have a full picture of all of the school's work. Governors have completed a basic audit of provision for community cohesion, but plans to extend this beyond the immediate environment are in the early stages of development.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children become familiar with the Reception class in the term before they begin. Consequently, they settle in quickly and begin to develop their confidence and independence. The atmosphere is warm and inviting and this means that children come into school happily each morning, ready to engage in all the activities provided for them. They make good progress and most children reach nationally expected levels by the time they transfer to Year 1.

The development of literacy and numeracy skills starts as soon as children start school. Children learned to count forwards and backwards up to five and to perform simple subtraction calculations during a lessons on 'Five Currant Buns'. Individual children eagerly gave a 'penny' to 'buy' a 'bun,' before counting how many were left in the basket.

There is a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those that children choose for themselves. Adults model language well for the children, helping them to increase their vocabulary and communication skills. Children enjoyed working together to hunt for 'treasure' in the sandpit, drawing 'maps' and counting the coins.

Leadership is good. Children's progress is assessed and tracked carefully. Adults are careful to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of both the Reception and the Year 1 children in the class. This works well, with the older children assuming more responsibility. Leaders have rightly identified the need to extend the outdoor facilities to provide more opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Toilet facilities for children are also due to be extended and refurbished to meet the needs of the growing number of children entering Reception.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was higher than is usually the case. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are extremely positive about the school's work. All agree that their children enjoy school, that children are kept safe and that parents and carers receive good information about their children's progress. They are very happy about the teaching and say that their children's needs are met effectively. Many are very appreciative about the support and care given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors agree with all their positive views. A small minority of parents and carers are concerned about the way that the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors are satisfied that procedures are robust and understood by pupils and staff. Observations in lessons and in the playgrounds showed no unacceptable behaviour and all of the pupils who returned questionnaires and expressed their views verbally to the inspectors say that behaviour is good and that they are confident that any difficulties would be swiftly resolved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fowlmere Primary 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	74	18	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	79	13	18	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	52	31	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	42	35	48	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	59	25	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	48	32	44	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	49	31	42	2	3	0	0
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)	40	55	27	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	29	40	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	42	26	36	8	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	45	26	36	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	55	26	36	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	67	19	26	2	3	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fowlmere Primary School, Royston, SG8 7SL

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school recently and telling us your opinions about your school. Thank you also to those pupils who returned questionnaires. Your views, along with everything else that we saw, helped us form a clear view about how well your school works. You go to a good school and these are some of the important things we found out about it:

- all the adults take really good care of you and help you if you have any problems
- you understand what it means to be healthy, and many of you enjoy the nutritious school lunches and take part in after-school sport
- you support and respect each other well
- your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
- you work hard in lessons and try to do your best
- the children in Reception settle into school quickly and enjoy all the activities organised for them
- the teaching is good and helps you to make good progress
- you attend school regularly so you do not miss important parts of your education.

Many of you are not sure about your individual targets for improvement; we have asked the teachers to involve you more in this process and encourage you to review your progress towards these targets more often. We have also asked your headteacher and governors to establish better links with schools and communities in different areas of the United Kingdom and overseas to help you learn more about cultures, religions and beliefs other than your own.

You can play your part in helping your school become even better by making sure you continue to work hard, behave well and attend school every day.

Yours sincerely

Mary Summers

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.