

Fairstead Community Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120906
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358875
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Joy Richardson

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	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Sale
Headteacher	Suzanne O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	19 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by 12 teachers and had meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of Governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and records of their progress. They scrutinised responses from questionnaires, including 29 returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the school doing to raise attainment, particularly in writing?
- How does the school make sure that teaching always aims high?
- How effective is the work with individual pupils in helping them to catch up?
- Is attendance improving, and how is this affecting learning?

Information about the school

The school is a larger-than-average primary school. It draws pupils from the eastern part of King's Lynn, an area of significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage, a quarter have another White background, and others are from a variety of different ethnic heritages. Just over a quarter speak English as an additional language, and 20 pupils are at an early stage in acquiring the language. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average. Since the last inspection, a nursery class has opened and a breakfast club has been established. The school achieved the Investors in Families award in October 2010.

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 and improving school that is strongly focused on continuing to raise pupils' achievement. Pupils are happy and secure at school and thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect. They learn how to learn, and this enables them to make the most of the many opportunities the school offers, in and out of the classroom.

Pupils are taught well, with careful attention to the knowledge and skills expected at each age. As a result, they make good and sometimes excellent progress, often from a low starting point. Their attainment by the time they leave is broadly average. The school values pupils as individuals and tailors its provision to help overcome any barriers to learning. Swift action is taken if pupils are falling behind and personalised interventions are effective in accelerating progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well and make rapid progress so that they participate fully in school life.

The school recognises that the speaking skills of many pupils are underdeveloped and that this impedes their learning. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, to talk ideas through with partners and to use new vocabulary. However, they are not consistently challenged to turn their thoughts into words and to speak out clearly and confidently. Pupils make good progress in writing, though teaching does not always ensure that accuracy in spelling, punctuation and handwriting is maintained when pupils are working on their own.

Pupils behave well. They show good manners and are caring towards others, responding to the good example and clear expectations of the adults around them. Rewards, such as a lunchtime place at the top table with the headteacher, are highly prized. Pupils are fully involved in exploring ideas about how to make the school better, and they are keen to play their part, for example in looking after younger ones in the playground. Attendance has improved and is broadly average.

The headteacher and senior staff lead the school with vision and determination to help all pupils achieve their potential. Teamwork by the whole staff is strong and good practice is shared. The school uses its resources carefully to maximise pupils' learning and enrich their educational experience. The school engages effectively with parents, listening to their concerns and welcoming their involvement in school life. It is not yet fully harnessing their support for learning at home, for example through regular reading. The newly established governing body is well led so that it has a clear understanding of its responsibilities and is effectively developing its oversight of the school's work.

The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. It takes stock constantly of what it is doing well and what it could do better and uses this evaluation to plan purposeful action for improvement. It sets challenging targets that it is largely successful in meeting, and has a strong team to lead the school's further development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop pupils' skills in speaking so that they can express their ideas clearly and speak with confidence to an audience.
- Reinforce progress in writing by ensuring that pupils apply their knowledge of spelling, punctuation and handwriting in all their work.
- Extend the practising of basic skills by enlisting and guiding parental support for learning at home.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school in Nursery or Reception with skills that are often much less developed than usual at this age, particularly in speech and language. Whatever their starting point, pupils make good progress through the school. They have positive attitudes to learning, concentrate on their work and try hard. Pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve, particularly in the older years. Pupils' work in lessons shows that they are achieving broadly in line with expectations for their age. Where this is not the case, the pace of pupils' progress is helping to close the gap. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, make good progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. They learn to use the sounds of letters for reading and writing, and gain skills in regular guided reading sessions. Pupils' fluency in writing is improving, supported by work to enrich pupils' experience of language, although there is not always enough attention to accuracy. Pupils are competent in using numbers. They apply skills in information and communication technology in work across the curriculum.

Pupils' all round personal development is good. They understand and try to abide by the rules and they behave well. Pupils cooperate with adults and do as they are asked, so that learning proceeds in a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils have good social skills and are polite and friendly. They learn to understand and to control their feelings, and to work and play harmoniously with others. The diversity of backgrounds and languages within the school is celebrated and pupils are interested in different people, places and customs.

Pupils feel safe at school, and learn how to keep themselves and others safe. They know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and make suggestions about healthy eating at school. Pupils take pride in the school and have a strong sense of belonging. They readily contribute their views through the school council, as when deciding how to organise the tables at lunchtime, or helping to raise money for charity. Pupils reach out into the local community, for example playing bowls with older people and entertaining them for tea. Pupils strive for a high level of attendance, knowing that this is necessary to succeed in learning, and persistent absence has been reduced. They are developing the skills needed for later life, and widening their awareness of opportunities that could be available to them.

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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	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

Pupils benefit from good teaching. Staff have a good knowledge of pupils and of their different needs and capabilities. Work is planned well to take account of the level of achievement expected of different ages, and the additional support or challenge required by individuals. Regular assessment supports this provision. Relationships are good, classes are managed effectively and consistent expectations of behaviour are maintained. All this creates a good environment for learning. In most lessons, teaching sets a good pace and questions are used effectively to check and extend learning. In some lessons, pupils' speaking skills are promoted well, though the school recognises that this is an area for further development across the whole school. Feedback to pupils, through marking and discussion, helps them to improve, particularly in the older classes where they are expected to act on this themselves. Teaching does not always insist enough on accuracy in pupils' writing or a consistently high standard of presentation.

The school provides a broad curriculum that is lively and interesting. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn Spanish, and all have the chance to learn the violin. Theme weeks such as 'Magical Science' engage the whole school. The curriculum is successfully planned, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Work often draws interestingly on different subjects, though this cross-curricular work is not always monitored closely enough to ensure progress in gaining knowledge and skills. Pupils participate in a wide variety of after school clubs that extend their interests and skills in many areas, from archery and street dance,

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to film club and creative craft. The breakfast club before school offers exciting learning activities as well as a nutritious and sociable meal. Visits and visitors and residential visits expand pupils' horizons and enrich their learning.

The school cares well for pupils, whatever their background or individual needs. Pupils who face difficult circumstances benefit from consistent guidance. Additional support for learning is provided through personalised interventions that are well tailored to pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities gain confidence in learning because of the systematic support they receive. Staff have a good understanding of how to support those who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils turn readily to adults, who provide positive, gentle supervision, for example in the organisation of playground games. Support staff work effectively as valued members of the team. Support and guidance for pupils' learning at home are not strongly developed.

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 school's leaders are effective in setting the school's sights high and working together to bring about improvement. The school's development plan is specific about targets for raising achievement and clear about the actions needed to improve learning and progress. Leadership is broadly based and teamwork is strong. Staff work together to develop their skills, with a focus on extending effective practice in teaching and learning.

The governing body, with strong leadership, is becoming quickly established and increasingly effective in challenging and supporting the school. The school has good procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety. The recent Investors in Families award reflects the school's commitment to working with families for the benefit of pupils. For example, a 'learning catalyst' has been highly effective in drawing parents into the school and involving them in school life, so that they can see how their children are learning. Pupils have homework and are provided with book bags, though expectations about regular reading at home are not clearly explained. The school recognises this as an area for development, building on the positive relationships it has fostered with parents. The school works well with other agencies to promote pupils' welfare and is establishing partnerships with other schools to extend opportunities for learning.

The school works hard to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils, and to ensure that all are treated fairly. It contributes much to the well-being of the local community, for example offering opportunities for adult learning and drawing together people from

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diverse backgrounds in school events. It is seeking to build more national and international links to increase its contribution to the wider community.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 make good progress through Nursery and Reception. They are well on the way towards the early learning goals by the end of Reception, and more than half reach or exceed them. Children make good progress in their personal and social skills. They learn to share, to take turns and to look after themselves. They enjoy helping to tidy up. Children make good progress in their use of language, in reading and writing letters and words and in using numbers.

The Nursery and Reception classrooms and outside areas offer a wealth of activities to delight, absorb and challenge children. The staff lead children's learning forward in ways that enrich experience and imagination, extend physical and creative skills and promote the use of language. Children become absorbed in what they are doing, exercising choice and sustaining interest in their play. They enjoy working together with an adult and cooperate well within a group.

The adults form a strong team and are sensitive to children's individual needs. They provide reassuring routines that help children to settle securely and to grow in independence. Good relationships are established with parents from the start through home visits, and many conversations take place informally on a daily basis. Parents are welcomed to spend time alongside their child in the classroom so that they can share understanding of how their child is developing.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed to ensure good quality provision for children. Activities are well planned and resourced. The progress of

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individuals is carefully charted and recorded in learning journals that are shared with parents. Individual assessment information is not always put together for the group as a whole, to monitor strengths and weaknesses in progress over the Foundation Stage and into Year 1.

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

A much smaller-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They agreed that: the school keeps children safe; teaching is good; the school is well led and managed; and that they are happy with their child's experience. Parents who spoke with inspectors agreed. The findings of the inspection endorse parents' positive views. A few parents would like more help to support learning at home. The view of inspectors is that this is an area requiring development, as recognised by the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairstead Community Primary 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 267 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	59	11	38	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	55	13	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	8	28	18	62	3	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	38	15	52	2	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	45	16	55	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	24	19	66	3	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	28	19	66	2	7	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)	8	28	16	55	3	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	34	14	48	3	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	34	15	52	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	14	22	76	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	34	15	52	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	45	16	55	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



10 March 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairstead Community Primary and Nursery School, King's Lynn, PE30 4RR

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for welcoming us and talking to us about your experiences at school. We noticed your good manners and we saw you caring, cooperating, concentrating and celebrating, just as the school expects you to do. We were interested to hear about the reward for the class with the best attendance, and to see the photographs of all of you who had not missed a single day. Well done!

We found that the school gives you a good education. The teachers are good at helping you to make progress, even if you find work difficult. They make learning interesting and help you to understand. Many of you know how to improve your work and are trying hard to reach the targets that have been set for you.

We have been talking with the staff about ways of helping you to do even better. We think that you need to practise your speaking skills so that you can explain your ideas and present them confidently to other people. To improve your writing, you need to take care with your handwriting, and check your spelling and punctuation carefully. We also think it would be useful for your parents to know more about how to help you at home, particularly when you are learning to read.

We hope you will go on making the most of all the opportunities the school offers you and that you will aim high in the future.

Yours sincerely

Joy Richardson

Lead inspector

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