

Fakenham Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121005
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339826
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Rumley
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Parker-Beeson
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2006
School address	Norwich Road Fakenham, Norfolk NR21 8HN
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Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

Age group 3–7

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2010

Inspection number 339826

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 lessons and observed 12 teachers. They also held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school improvement and development plan, the tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, the work pupils were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by staff, a sample of pupils and 80 parents.

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

- the rate of progress of all groups of pupils in the school
- the effectiveness of teaching in engaging the pupils so that they make good progress
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage in promoting the development of the younger children
- the effectiveness of the leadership and management in driving improvements in the school.

Information about the school

The school is larger than other infant schools. It is situated in the northern part of Norfolk and serves the market town of Fakenham and the surrounding rural areas. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, although there is a very small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is organised through the Nursery and Reception classes. The Fakenham Gateway Sure Start Children's Centre was built on the site in 2007 and is managed by the school. The new headteacher has been in post since January 2009. The school has received Healthy School Status and the Activemark award.

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. The headteacher provides clear leadership so that all the

- staff are challenged to provide the very best opportunities for the pupils. She has developed rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress which are raising standards in the school. Some staff were initially apprehensive about the changes, but they are now fully supportive and embedding the good practice which is supporting significant improvements in the school. The caring and supportive atmosphere within this school provides a high-quality environment for learning for the pupils. The existence of the new Children's Centre within the school provides a first rate opportunity for children to make a good start to their education. One parent wrote: 'Our children really enjoy coming to this school. The teachers and support staff are really welcoming and approachable. The school is giving them a good start to their education.'

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their below average starting

- points and the vast majority attain standards that are broadly average by the time
- they leave the school. Good teaching, the emphasis on supporting underachieving pupils and a more structured approach to key skills are contributing to the good progress of the pupils. The improving results reflect the school's ambition to raise standards so that they are above the national average, particularly in reading and writing. The school is aware that pupils are not always provided with sufficient creative opportunities to extend their reading and writing skills. Skills in information and communication technology are satisfactory, but are not sufficiently developed across the different subject areas.

The high quality of care, guidance and support greatly promotes pupils' good

- personal development. Staff work very closely with parents and carers to ensure that there is a smooth transition between the Children's Centre, the Nursery year and subsequently into the main school. The school is particularly successful in integrating children who require additional support and encouragement during their early years.

Pupils enjoy their time at school and develop into friendly and positive individuals. The behaviour of pupils is good and this contributes to a positive atmosphere for learning and personal growth. The school has been proactive in monitoring absences and encouraging better attendance. Although attendance is now average, the poor attendance of a small number of pupils is adversely affecting their progress and experience of school.

Pupils are actively engaged in lessons and make good progress. There is a positive atmosphere in lessons and pupils enjoy the experience of school and learning new things.

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The curriculum is good and the school uses the outdoor environment well, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to support pupils' interest and understanding.

Staff are very attentive of the expected targets for the pupils and the need to accelerate their progress during their time at the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic. The headteacher and senior leaders are well aware of the strengths and areas for development. Strategic planning is good and there are clear actions for improvement. However, the leadership of the subject areas is variable within the school and not all subject leaders are fully effective in their planning, supporting and monitoring responsibilities.

The school's very caring approach is evident in the very positive relationships with parents and carers who greatly appreciate the support for their children. Parents are given regular information about school events and the progress of their children. The effective leadership of the school, the improving record of pupils' progress and the clear strategies for improvement indicate that this school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attainment of pupils across the school so that standards are above the national average by:
 - providing more creative opportunities for all pupils to extend their reading and writing skills
 - ensuring that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology across the curriculum areas
 - using external agencies and school commendations to support parents and carers in improving the attendance of some pupils.
 - Develop the roles of all subject leaders so that they:
 - are clearly aware of their responsibilities and the tasks to be completed
 - provide appropriate support for teachers in their specialist area
 - regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to improve pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' current work shows that the majority are making good progress and achieving

- well. Pupils are attentive and display an enthusiasm to do well. Most enjoy learning
- and make good progress in their lessons. For example, Year 2 pupils were fully engaged in their work and made good progress when they were analysing data on insects which they had found on their the nature walk along the River Wensum.

By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has been particularly successful in increasing the number of pupils who gain the higher levels in reading and mathematics. The rigorous tracking system identifies underachieving pupils, who then receive appropriate support through a range of intervention strategies. The school is presently providing additional small group support in Years 1 and 2 which is accelerating the progress of the pupils. Pupils with

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special educational needs and/or disabilities and those entitled to free school meals make good progress in line with others. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress.

Pupils value being part of a caring community in which they feel safe and secure. They are confident that any issues or concerns are addressed promptly and effectively. Behaviour in classrooms and around school is good and this reflects the school's high expectations for all pupils. Pupils respond well to the commendations in assembly for good work and behaviour. Most pupils have a very clear understanding of eating healthily and taking part in sporting activities. The school council is active in the school and supports projects, such as improvements in the playground. Pupils raise money for a range of charities and make a good contribution to the local community, such as carol singing at the local care homes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they show respect and sensitivity towards each other. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing satisfactorily. As a result, they are adequately prepared for their transfer to the local junior school.

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?

The positive relationship between teachers and pupils encourages pupils to enjoy their learning and make good progress. Classrooms are attractive learning areas with good examples of pupils' work on display. Pupils with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants both in whole class and smaller teaching groups. In the best lessons, teachers plan a range of interesting activities and have high expectations of the pupils. As a result, pupils display enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration. Outstanding learning takes place when teachers creatively plan activities which fully motivate and engage the pupils in their learning. Teachers are sharing their assessment of work so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. However, in a small number of lessons, pupils lose concentration when the tasks are occasionally too difficult or insufficiently challenging.

The more structured approach to literacy and numeracy, which have been introduced by the new headteacher, supports pupils' good progress. There has been a particular emphasis on the development of writing through the different subject areas which is supporting the development of literacy skills. The curriculum focus weeks and cross-curricular themes effectively show pupils the links between the different subjects and bring learning to life. The school makes good use of the extensive grounds which greatly motivate the pupils and helps them to develop their understanding through practical experience. There are good opportunities in the creative arts and the pupils particularly enjoy the regular singing lessons. However, the limited information and communication technology facilities do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their computer skills across the different subject areas. There are numerous visitors to the school including representatives from different cultures and faiths which provide additional experiences for the pupils. The many visits including those to Swaffham Museum, Field Farm in Hillington and the coast at Cromer provide good enrichment for the curriculum. There is a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, which greatly enhances the pupils' enjoyment and experience of school.

Arrangements for pupils' care, guidance and support are strengths of the school. There are effective systems of individual support for all pupils, including those whose

- circumstances make them vulnerable or who have difficulties with learning. Pupils
- are very well known as individuals and emphasise that there are always members of
- staff to talk to if they have a problem. Good working relationships between the school and external agencies benefit pupils, ensuring their social and learning needs are met through effective programmes. The school is successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The Children's Centre is very effective in working with parents and carers so that they can fully support the development of their children. Systems for monitoring absences have reduced the rates of persistence absence, although a small number of pupils have unsatisfactory attendance. Good arrangements are in place to support a smooth transition to the junior school.

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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 strong leadership which is driving improvements in the school. The key strategic priorities have been shared with staff so that there is a clear agenda for raising standards in all areas of the school's work. Key leaders in the school such as the deputy headteacher, head of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Children's Centre Manager are providing a strong impetus for improvement across the school. Rigorous systems of monitoring teaching and tracking pupils' progress are beginning to raise the standards achieved.

The school improvement and development plan is a comprehensive working document with clear actions and targets which are particularly focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress. Governors are informed of the school's progress and areas for development. They are supportive and are effective in holding the school to account. They are presently reviewing their evaluating and monitoring systems so that they can support school improvements even more effectively. Robust procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and underpin the school's very caring approach. The procedures for recording safeguarding issues in the Children's Centre are exemplary. The school's strong commitment to inclusion and equal opportunities for all ensures that the school is fully inclusive in integrating pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds.

The school has good partnerships with the local junior school, community groups and Fakenham School Sports Partnership. The Children's Centre has extensive links with a range of external services and support groups. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion and works closely with a variety of groups in the town. It has been proactive in arranging multicultural events and recently invited a Polish mother to share a homeland story with the Reception class. The school recognises that more could be done to develop further the action plan and evaluate the impact of their work on community cohesion.

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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	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 a good start to their education because of the well-planned provision, high quality of care and the consistently good teaching. Staff in the Children's Centre and the Nursery and Reception classes provides a secure and exciting environment where children learn quickly and happily. They make good progress particularly in their personal development as well as in their speaking and listening skills. The regular emphasis on linking sounds and letters gives children a good basis to improve their reading and writing. Structured activities are having a significant impact on their personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills. The children develop their social skills, behave well and help each other. They show tremendous curiosity and enthusiasm as they enjoy the different activities. They are developing independence and learning to share and cooperate with each other. There is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities.

Teachers keep detailed records of children's skills and use this information to match the activities well to the full range of learning needs. Children also keep a record of their experiences through their 'Special Book' which they share proudly with parents and carers. The school is developing a more coordinated assessment system which will ensure the Nursery groups are tracking progress in the same way in both the school and Children's Centre. The calm and purposeful atmosphere is created by good organisation and leadership. The teachers, teaching assistants and key workers work extremely well together so that there are clear expectations of the children.

The spacious accommodation and extensive outdoor area are used very effectively to support the learning of the children. There are good procedures in place to ensure a seamless transition from the Children's Centre to the school. There is regular liaison with parents and carers, who speak very highly of the care and support the school provides for their children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 majority of parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school and its impact on their children's learning. Responses to the questionnaire included a number of detailed comments emphasising the caring approach of staff towards their children. A small minority of respondents suggested the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors found no evidence to support this view and feel that the school deals effectively with pupils who sometimes display challenging behaviour. There are no particular trends in the very small number of criticism made in the questionnaires. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fakenham Infants' 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	61	29	36	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	55	32	40	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	34	43	40	50	6	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	45	36	45	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	55	33	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	44	36	45	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	45	44	55	0	0	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)	34	43	30	38	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	45	41	51	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	34	36	45	9	11	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	29	50	63	2	3	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	28	35	43	54	3	4	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	54	32	40	2	3	1	1

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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fakenham Infant and Nursery School, Norfolk, NR21 8HN

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school and for talking with us during the inspection. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at your work. It was also good to listen to you singing in the hall and see you during playtime. Your school is a good one and your parents are very pleased with the good start you make in your education. There are many positive things about your school.

You enjoy school and make good progress in your lessons.

You are friendly, positive and well behaved.

You show kindness and consideration to others.

You have a good understanding of issues related to safety and healthy lifestyles.

The teachers and the support staff care greatly for you.

Your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and exciting.

You are making good use of your extensive school grounds and play areas.

You have a good headteacher.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things to make the school even better:

- help you to raise your standards of work by providing creative opportunities for reading and writing as well as allowing you to make greater use of computers
- improve the attendance rates in the school so that they are above the national average
- ensure that subject leaders observe other teachers and keep a good check on standards in their subjects.

We would like to wish you success in your future education. Keep working hard so

- that you make the very best progress in your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector

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