

Fen Drayton Primary School

Cootes Lane, Fen Drayton, Cambridge, CB24 4SL

Inspection dates

21—22 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good and teachers plan interesting and well-resourced lessons that pupils enjoy.
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, have positive attitudes to learning, make good progress and achieve well.
- The adults that work alongside teachers are used very effectively and often give pupils excellent support.
- Early reading skills are taught systematically and successfully. Most pupils reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and their attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe in school and they learn and play together well.
- The leadership of the new headteacher is generating the vision and enthusiasm to bring about improvements that build on the school's previously good performance.
- There are well-organised and thorough checks made on how much progress pupils are making and on the quality of teaching.
- The staff work well together as a team, and along with governors, are committed to doing their best for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of writing and pupils' standards and progress in writing are not as good as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Improvements are needed in the reliability and capability of some of the school's computers and in the quality of learning in information and communication technology for older pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in each class and visited 12 lessons. Four observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector had meetings with pupils, staff and three members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors. He also met a representative from the local authority to discuss the school's performance.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, attainment and progress information, teachers' planning, performance monitoring reports and the school's safeguarding arrangements. He also observed pupils' behaviour and discussed this with pupils, looked at the work in pupils' books and heard pupils from Years 1 and 2 reading.
- The inspector took into account the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the information on the views of parents provided by the school. He also met some parents informally at the end of the first day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Rob McKeown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has increased by 30 since its last inspection.
- Pupils are taught in one single-age and three mixed-age classes.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for its pupils off site.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2012, following a year when the school was led by the assistant headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, raise standards and increase progress in writing by:
 - giving all pupils daily writing tasks and more chance to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English
 - setting targets for pupils to help them work on the aspects of writing they need to improve the most
 - agreeing a consistent and accurate approach to assessing pupils' writing
 - leaders making regular checks on the quality of the teaching of writing and the impact it is having on pupils' achievement.
- Improve provision in information and communication technology by:
 - making sure the computers older pupils use are in good working order and fit for purpose
 - making sure that all pupils know how to use the internet safely
 - agreeing a clear structure and shared understanding of the computer skills pupils should be learning as they move through the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Children generally start school in Reception with skills and aptitudes that are typical for their age, although there is some variability within each year group and from year to year. The standards pupils reach in Year 6 represent good progress from their individual starting points and this prepares them well for secondary school.
- Standards in English and mathematics are above average and have been for most years since the last inspection. However, pupils did comparatively better in reading and mathematics, than they did in writing last year. This has prompted changes in the teaching of writing, including spelling, which have begun to bring about improvements.
- The work in pupils' books shows that most are making good progress in English and mathematics, although progress in writing is better in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 5 and 6. Some pupils are not getting enough regular practice with their writing including in subjects other than English. Children in the Reception class are making good progress in developing their early literacy and mathematical skills.
- The school's tracking information is used effectively to identify how well all pupils are doing and leaders pick up any dips in progress. This year the school has introduced some catch-up sessions for a few pupils who have gaps in their mathematical understanding. These have proved very successful in speeding up progress.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This is because they receive good support in lessons and in well-planned individual teaching sessions, which concentrate on the skills they need to develop the most.
- The progress of the few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is also good. The standards reached by these pupils in English and mathematics last year matched what was expected for all pupils nationally. The school makes effective use of the extra funds for these pupils to provide additional teaching and enrichment activities, and to ease their transition to secondary school.
- Most pupils leave the school with good reading skills. The systematic teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) for younger pupils is good and gets them off to a positive start with their reading. This year, daily phonics sessions include older pupils and are linked well with the teaching of writing, particularly for learning key spelling skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils receive mostly good and occasionally outstanding teaching. There is good teaching in all four classes. Most of the teaching meets pupils' learning needs well and helps them gain good knowledge and understanding. Where it is less effective, the pace of learning can be too slow and more-able pupils are not stretched enough.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan learning tasks that are interesting and mostly matched to pupils' different capabilities. The best lessons give pupils the chance to stretch their thinking, for example in looking for consecutive number patterns in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Teachers also make very good use of a variety of equipment to support pupils' learning, such as the use of programmable toys when investigating directions in Years 1 and 2.

- Reception children are given a good selection of indoor and outdoor learning experiences, which capture their interest and help develop their confidence and skills. The teaching of communication, literacy and mathematical skills has a suitably high profile. Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are benefiting from having their learning activities linked together well in topics, such as the Great Fire of London.
- Pupils talking about learning and discussing their ideas are positive aspects of the most effective lessons. Teachers are good at introducing pupils to new words linked to particular subjects and testing their knowledge with probing questions. There are also good opportunities for pupils to work cooperatively in groups, which they do well, and to reflect on the success of their learning.
- The contribution made by the adults that work alongside teachers is routinely good and often outstanding. They are effective because they know the pupils well, have high levels of skill and know exactly what the teachers expect from them. They make a significant contribution towards supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs but also in teaching the whole-school phonics and spelling programmes.
- Good teaching is also promoting pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, through reflecting on and writing about the arguments for and against development in the rain forests. Specialist teaching in music is another particularly strong feature of pupils' experiences.
- Since the beginning of this year, more emphasis has been placed on expecting pupils to do their best when presenting their work. Teachers have also adopted a more consistent approach to marking pupils' work. The best marking is now giving pupils detailed feedback on the success of their learning and points out what could be better. Teachers are less effective at setting learning targets to help pupils know exactly what they need to improve the most in their writing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Almost all are keen to learn, concentrate well and do their best. Most parents rightly believe that behaviour is good and that the school manages it well.
 - Behaviour outdoors and around the school is also good, although Year 6 pupils say that pupils are more likely to fall out when playing outside at lunchtime. They also recalled one or two isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour last year and these have been logged appropriately by the school. Similar incidents have not occurred this year.
 - Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school and parents who responded to Parent View agree. Pupils also say that bullying is not something they encounter and that staff respond promptly to any concerns they may have about the behaviour of others. However, Year 6 pupils were not entirely clear about all the different types of bullying or the school's advice on how to use the internet safely.
 - The new headteacher has introduced a new approach to helping pupils to develop some key personal skills, such as taking responsibility, being resourceful and showing resilience in their learning. These qualities are recognised well in the weekly family assemblies, when pupils receive commendations for the good things they do in school.
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- Positive relationships and strong adult role models help pupils to feel safe and secure in school. Reception children are developing good personal and social skills in their first year at school because of established routines and the guidance they are given.
- Attendance is above average and has improved since the start of this academic year. Good procedures are in place for tackling any persistent absence. The headteacher has recently reiterated the school's expectations that all pupils should arrive at school on time and have full attendance whenever possible.

The leadership and management are good

- The quality of leadership and management has stepped up a gear since the arrival of the new headteacher. The staff and governors are firmly behind the headteacher and collectively they display the teamwork, commitment and ambition to secure the school's continued success.
- Through robust checks, the headteacher has quickly identified the many things that are going well in the school and revealed some things that could be improved upon. These are clearly set out in a very tightly focused school development plan, which explains how things will improve term by term.
- There are well-organised and regular checks made by the headteacher on the quality of teaching and records from observations show how these are leading to overall improvement. Staff have also had the chance to strengthen their teaching skills by attending training and through visiting other schools to observe outstanding teaching.
- Pupils' progress is tracked thoroughly and there is a sharper emphasis this year on looking at how well different groups of pupils are doing, for example, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, or those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Staff meet with the headteacher each term to discuss the progress pupils are making and to identify any who require additional help so they can catch up.
- Improvements have been introduced to strengthen the teaching of writing but it is too soon for these to have had a full impact on pupils' achievement. The headteacher has also detected some unreliability in some previously collected progress information, and has required more consistency and accuracy in teachers' assessments, particularly in writing.
- Pupils receive a good balance of learning across the full range of subjects. Learning in information and communication technology for older pupils is not as effective because some of the computers they use are unreliable or require updating. There is a lack of clarity about the computer skills pupils should be learning.
- Partnerships with parents are good and most parents who completed Parent View would recommend this school. One or two parents indicated that they were less pleased with the information they get about their child's progress and the homework their children receive. The headteacher already has plans to discuss these issues when she holds a meeting with parents later this term.
- Partnerships with other local schools and the local authority are also good. The local authority has given the school good support in the last year, providing guidance on strengthening leadership and teaching in English and mathematics, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- The checks and records kept for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. There is also a strong commitment among staff to see that all pupils receive suitable care and guidance, so that all pupils have an equal chance to succeed.

 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the last inspection, governors have continued to give the school good support and also kept a check on its progress. Governors receive comprehensive and detailed information from the headteacher, including on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement and how they compare to that of other similar schools. Following training and under the direction of the new headteacher, governors are adopting a more systematic and thorough approach to judging how well the school is doing. A governor-visit programme is being scheduled, which includes looking more closely at the progress being made in the termly development plan. Governors keep a close check on the school's finances, including how the school spends the money it gets for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the impact this is having. They also carry out an annual appraisal of the headteacher's performance and set targets that include improving pupils' achievement. They know how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. They oversee the appraisal of all other members of staff, including any changes in salary progression.
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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	110606
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	403123

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	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Gatley
Headteacher	Anna-Claire Norden
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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Fax number	01954 273345
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