

Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School

School Lane, Fenstanton, Huntingdon, PE28 9JR

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is good.
- Teachers use questioning well to help pupils think deeply about what they are learning and to support those with learning difficulties.
- Children in Reception make good progress because teachers make sure that they have many opportunities to talk to each other and to develop mathematical skills.
- Teachers focus well on reading, writing and mathematics and encourage pupils to work independently and in small groups.
- Pupils like being at school and enjoy learning.
- Pupils behave well and say bullying is rare. They feel safe and well cared for and that any problems they have are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. She works well with governors, other leaders and staff to make sure pupils' progress and achievement continue to improve.
- Leaders know what must be done to make the school improve and provide good training to help teachers improve their skills. Leaders are effective and well trained. The school is improving well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not check during lessons how well pupils make progress so work is not always challenging enough for the whole lesson.
- Teachers do not always tell pupils how to improve their work in marking, or provide time for pupils to follow the guidance when it is given.
- The skilled learning assistants are not always best used to support younger pupils in lessons when they are learning to read through linking sounds and letters.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine teachers in 20 lessons or parts of lessons. One observation was shared with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and governors, a representative of the local authority and the school's school improvement adviser. Inspectors also spoke to parents bringing their children to school.
- Inspectors examined documents about the school's work, including information about the achievement of pupils, development planning and the school's self-evaluation.
- Inspectors took account of 47 responses to the, Parent View, online questionnaire, and the school's own survey of parents' views. They considered 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

Rob McKeown

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of broadly average size for its type. Nearly all pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- More pupils are joining the school from outside its local catchment area of the villages of Fenstanton and Hilton.
- Most pupils are White British and none are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average. A small number of pupils have social and emotional difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well-below average. This is the additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others.
- The numbers of staff, mainly learning assistants, has reduced.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and further raise pupils' achievement by making sure:
 - pupils receive consistently challenging work by checking on their progress during lessons and providing extra work to support or challenge them where necessary
 - when teachers mark pupils' work they tell pupils how to improve it and provide time for them to carry out the advice they are given.
- Make sure that learning assistants are available to support teachers when young pupils are being taught how to link sounds and letters to help them read well.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Reception with skills and experiences that are below those typical for their age. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but, increasingly, many children have underdeveloped communication and numeracy skills for their age. They make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 they reach a good level of development. Most meet the nationally expected levels across the areas development, although some do not do so in literacy and mathematics.
- Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6, and are slowly rising. In particular, standards in reading and mathematics are improving quickly. Pupils make good progress from their starting points, and their rate of progress is improving further.
- Pupils enjoy the activities they do, and their positive attitudes to school have a good effect on how well they learn.
- Pupils write well and express their ideas and understanding clearly. They have a wide vocabulary, which they use well to make their writing interesting and imaginative.
- Pupils read a wide range of books with considerable enjoyment and are keen to learn. Those pupils who find reading hard know how to link sounds and letters together to help them recognise words. The results of the school's 2013 reading checks were similar to the results in 2012, and above average. The school has recognised that some pupils still struggle to read well and has introduced a wide range of materials to promote better progress in reading.
- Pupils practise basic mathematical skills regularly. They add, subtract, multiply and divide competently and with confidence. They reinforce their skills through frequent problem-solving activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported by learning assistants, who make sure that they gain the skills to work independently, and to make progress in all subjects.
- The small number of vulnerable pupils with social and emotional difficulties make good progress. They are well supported by sensitive learning assistants who help them focus successfully on work.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make good and often faster progress than other pupils. In 2013, there were too few pupils eligible for support by the pupil premium funding to make a reliable judgement about their progress. Eligible pupils in the current Year 6 started in Year 2 about two terms behind other pupils in writing and one term behind in reading and mathematics. The gap has narrowed, and currently they are working at the same levels as other pupils. Funds are used well to purchase books to help them read, for support to help them catch up and to make sure they have the same opportunities as other pupils for trips and out-of-school activities.
- The most-able pupils do well. They reach high levels in end of Year 6 national tests and make good and sometimes better progress than that expected nationally. They are well supported in lessons by teachers and learning assistants, and frequently receive extension activities that challenge them and ensure they achieve well.

- It is too early to evaluate the impact of the sports premium funding the school receives on pupils' achievement in sport and physical education. However, the school's assessment of pupils' physical skills shows that they make good progress. The school's well-considered proposed programme aims to provide a wide range of after-school activities and to support the funding of swimming for all pupils. It also aims to provide professional training for staff so that they can coach and train pupils in developing physical skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- In most lessons, teachers provide challenging work that is well matched to pupils' learning needs, whatever their ages or abilities. The work they provide challenges the most-able pupils and ensures slower-learning pupils gain confidence in their own abilities to learn well.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress accurately and mostly use the information effectively to plan a wide range of activities that captures pupils' interest and promotes their enthusiasm for learning.
- Teachers' questioning is very good. It probes the understanding and knowledge of all pupils, including the most-able, and supports and guides slower learners to help them understand new work well.
- Teachers make sure pupils have opportunities to work together in small groups, and independently. In this way pupils develop confidence in their own understanding and ability to learn independently, and learn to express themselves well. They also develop good social skills and positive attitudes to learning through working together, and learn to value and respect each other's comments and contributions to activities.
- Teachers make sure that pupils reinforce their reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills effectively in most subjects. They provide good opportunities for pupils to solve problems and carry out investigations.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Teachers and other adults help children settle into working quickly. They provide a wide range of indoor and outside activities with many opportunities for children to develop their literacy and mathematical skills. Relationships are very good and adults check children's progress thoroughly so that they can plan challenging and interesting activities to help children make good progress. They make sure children talk and explain their ideas, and use a wide vocabulary of words to develop their communication skills.
- Learning assistants work effectively with the pupils they support, whether they are disabled, have special educational needs, are higher attaining pupils or those supported through pupil premium funding. However, they are not deployed well enough to support teachers when they are teaching younger pupils how to link sounds and letters to develop their reading skills.
- Teachers' marking is mostly good, but they do not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work or the opportunities to carry out advice when it is given.
- Work is demanding in most lessons but, occasionally, it does not challenge pupils enough. This is because teachers do not always check pupils' progress during lessons, and then provide further work to make sure there is no slowing down in pupils' otherwise good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and disruptive behaviour is rare. They know what the school and class rules are about behaving well. Parents confirm that the school deals well with occasional unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They listen attentively to what teachers tell them, and take part in activities with enthusiasm. They find that the way topics are taught exciting and this contributes effectively to how well they learn.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, are and say that bullying of any kind is rare.
- Pupils feel safe and say they would be confident going to any member of staff about anything that worried them.
- Relationships between pupils are good. They help each other and older pupils look after younger ones in the playground well. Older pupils help run assemblies and organise how other pupils come into school after breaks and lunches.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average, though most have high levels of attendance. Persistent absence has reduced because the school works effectively to impress on parents how prolonged absence slows the progress pupils make.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good direction for the school to improve. She is well supported by other leaders and they communicate a consistent view of high expectations for staff and pupils. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and act quickly to deal with the latter. For example, they have dealt well with variability in standards in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders have dealt with the reduction in staff well, and retained a strong team of teachers and learning assistants. However, since the staff changes, learning assistants are not always where they are most needed, particularly in the time teachers use to teach pupils to link sounds and letters together to help them read.
- The school works well to improve teaching. There is no inadequate teaching and staff are well supported with high-quality training to ensure teaching is at least good, and that good teaching improves to outstanding. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching regularly to help teachers improve their classroom skills.
- Subject leaders are effective in their roles. They receive good training from senior staff, support from local authority staff, and develop their skills further by sharing good practice with staff in other schools. They provide good guidance to other staff and play a significant part in helping improve the quality of teaching.
- Teachers have targets linked to the progress made by pupils, their own professional development and the school's priorities for improvement. Teachers know they must meet their targets in order to advance on their salary scales.
- The local authority provides valuable support in helping the school evaluate its performance and

is effective in helping it plan improvements. The school works closely with other schools locally to share its own good practice and to gain from effective practice in other schools.

- Additional funding received from the government is used well and the school has appropriate plans to spend and evaluate the impact of the new sports funding.
- The curriculum is well organised and includes activities to enrich pupils' experience through residential trips, special subject days and visitors. Pupils learn about the religions and values of people in other countries, and other parts of England. This experience promotes their respect and tolerance for different people, and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. Staff have effective links with parents, and nursery schools, which work well to make sure children settle into school quickly. Staff are well aware of children's attainment on entry and carefully plan a wide range of activities to promote the development of literacy and mathematical skills.
- Parents are pleased with the school overall. Their only concern is about the mixed-age class organisation. Many feel the school is dealing with this well, but some are concerned that their children will not do as well as if in a single-age class. However, the inspection found that the school manages mixed age classes well, and that all pupils make good progress.
- The school provides several activities to support parents. For example, it recently ran a mathematics evening which was exceptionally well supported and appreciated by all who attended.
- The school effectively promotes good achievement by all pupils. It tackles its weaknesses quickly and, as a result, pupils' progress is improving. Leaders and managers continue to work hard and with some success to reduce absence. There is strong capacity for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body supports the school effectively and is well informed through detailed reports from the headteacher and its own searching questions about pupils' achievement.
 - Governors' training is thorough and well organised to make sure they can actively support the school and hold leaders to account for its performance. They have a good understanding of how well pupils achieve in relation to pupils nationally. They check on the performance of different groups of pupils in the school, and make sure that what they spend on supporting pupils funded through the pupil premium is having a positive impact on their progress. They know that the gap between these and other pupils has narrowed considerably.
 - Governors know how good teaching is and manage staff performance well. They rigorously apply the targets teachers must meet before they can move up the salary scales. They have supported the school in its planning for the use of its new sports funding. They ensure safeguarding requirements are met and make sure that the school checks on the suitability of new staff.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 110676 |
| Local authority | Cambridgeshire |
| Inspection number | 429503 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 259 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Andy Reynolds |
| Headteacher | Antonia Drysdale |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 February 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01480 375055 |
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