

INSPECTION REPORT

FULSTOW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Churchthorpe, Louth

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120447

Headteacher: Mr D A Webster

Reporting inspector: Mrs Rajinder Harrison
18059

Dates of inspection: 9th-10th June 2003

Inspection number: 248126

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Postcode:	LN11 0XL
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Dickinson
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fulstow Primary School is situated in a small commuter village situated midway between Grimsby and Louth. Social circumstances in the area are generally above average. The school is small with fifty-nine children, aged from four to eleven, in three, mixed age classes. The majority of pupils come from Fulstow and Covenham, but a few of them travel in from further afield. The school has no pupils eligible for free school meals or who are learning English as an additional language. Ten pupils require special educational support, but none of these has a statement for special educational needs. Pupil mobility is high because the population is fairly mobile.

Attainment of children on entry to the Reception group is generally above average, although it varies from year to year because of the very small numbers, where each child may represent up to twenty per cent of each year group.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school providing a good standard of education for all of its pupils. The school's very strong caring ethos enables pupils of all ages and abilities to achieve well. Children learn in a calm and friendly environment where they feel valued. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and the pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The overall good teaching helps pupils' achieve standards that are generally well above average by the age of eleven years. The school is led and managed well, and very good teamwork amongst the staff is an essential feature in the school's development. Valuable and effective support from the governors and parents contributes to the school's success. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- All pupils make good progress and standards are above average overall. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics.
- The overall quality of teaching is good, supported well by good assessment procedures and effective target setting for individual pupils.
- Good leadership and management from the headteacher result in effective teamwork whereby all members of the school community, including parents and governors, play a valuable part in the work of the school.
- As a result of the overall very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' personal development is excellent.

What could be improved

- The level of support for children in their Reception year and for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school.
- The quality of some of the information that parents receive from the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in October 1997, significant effort has gone into addressing effectively the key issues identified in the previous report, and into maintaining the identified strengths of the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved steadily. Overall improvement has been good and the school is well placed to improve further.

Planning takes into account the needs of all ages and abilities, including higher attaining pupils. Effective monitoring procedures enable teachers to review the standards individual pupils achieve. Assessment in English, mathematics and science and information and communication technology (ICT) is very rigorous. The information gathered enables better target setting for individual pupils at every stage of their learning. Pupils are encouraged to work independently both in lessons and in their own time outside school. Following the previous inspection, good provision was made to enhance music teaching across the school

and the recent appointment of a teacher, who has interest and expertise in the subject, continues to contribute to pupils' learning very effectively. Provision for music is satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	B	A*	A
mathematics	A	A*	A*	A*
science	D	A	B	C

Key	
Top 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The cohorts in each year group are very small and therefore fluctuations in these grades reflect variations in the numbers of pupils at each ability level in any one-year. A denotes the school's performance being in the highest 5% nationally, but again the school's data is based on very small numbers.*

Overall cohort sizes are small and vary from year to year. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils fluctuate from year to year. In addition, a significant number of pupils join the school other than in the Foundation Stage. The situation is also not helped in that the infants have had three different teachers over the three years they have been in this one class. As a result of all these circumstances, it is not always reliable to compare standards from year to year.

The school has successfully sustained steady progress over the last three years and standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the time pupils leave the school at the age of eleven. Overall improvement is above the national trend. These gains stem directly from the good teaching and from the very good assessment and monitoring procedures in place for the core subjects and ICT. Targets in English and mathematics are continually set and reviewed for individual pupils and the whole school. The information gained through careful analysis of all assessment data allows the school to set challenging yet achievable targets.

National Curriculum assessments in 2002 for pupils aged seven were well below average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. From teacher assessments, pupils achieved very high standards in science, when compared with schools nationally. However, with only a year group of eight pupils, comparisons with national data are of limited value, other than to note that the school recognised the need to address the provision for developing reading skills in the infant class. Overall standards in the core subjects for pupils in the current Year 2 are broadly in line with national averages. Evidence for other subjects indicates standards are broadly in line with expectations.

Test results in 2002 were very high in English and mathematics and well above average in science for pupils aged eleven years. High numbers of pupils attained the higher Level 5 in all these subjects. When compared with schools where a similar percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals, standards were well above average overall. Inspection evidence based on work seen, shows that standards attained by pupils who are in the present Year 6 school are well above average in the core subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and the majority attains broadly in line with average expectations by the age of eleven.

Children under five come into school with generally above average attainment. Pupils benefit from the very secure relationships they form with their peers and adults in the school. They are generally confident learners and as a consequence they achieve well. Because all the infants are in one class the youngest children, of Reception age, make very good progress as they work alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. This good progress continues in the junior classes and many pupils are motivated to work independently

because they enjoy learning. Standards of the work seen in history, art and design and geography are above expectations at the end of Year 6. Standards in all other subjects are at least satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very happy at school and are keen to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school has no incidence of exclusion. Pupils are very courteous and show great respect for others. Staff and parents have high expectations of good behaviour and all children respond well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships within school are excellent. Pupils and adults show great care and kindness towards each other and pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. Particularly good is the family atmosphere the school promotes – this is exemplary.
Attendance	Good – pupils enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Thirteen lessons were observed during the inspection. The majority of these lessons were judged to be good or better. In the very good lessons, pupils were fully engaged in their learning, work was challenging and they had very good opportunities to ask and answer questions. Because of the teachers' high expectations for good behaviour and hard work, progress in these lessons was very good. Pupils' are generally highly self-motivated and work diligently when left to take responsibility for their own learning.

The teaching of English and mathematics is generally very good. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils apply these confidently across other subjects. Teachers' secure subject knowledge, planning and good assessment strategies enable them to meet the needs of the vast majority of pupils effectively. In the absence of any support staff, the school also maximises the commitment of volunteers who work with pupils across the ages and ability range in the infant class in order to ensure every child achieves well. The teacher ensures planning skilfully takes the needs of all ages and interest levels into account. Whilst the direct teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good, groups of children who are not the focus of direct adult support sometimes make limited progress. The oldest pupils in the infant class develop high levels of self-discipline when asked to work unsupervised and as a consequence they achieve well. This also applies in the two-mixed age junior classes, where the vast majority of the pupils listen attentively and take their work very seriously. Only in occasional lessons, where there is a lack of pace or the work provides limited challenge to some groups of pupils, does the pace of learning slow down. Every effort is made to support pupils with special educational needs to work to their targets. The class teacher's time is spread to support all ability groups, but within the confines of any learning support staff currently being available, this sometimes limits progress of pupils with special educational needs.

Learning is good overall. Pupils work hard and try their best to meet their teachers' and their own expectations. Excellent relationships throughout ensure pupils gain the confidence to seek help from staff and peers. Pupils show a very caring approach when helping each other and the opportunities to work in partnership with others are promoted effectively. Pupils of all ages and abilities are confident learners and respond well when praised for their hard work and effort. Sometimes, when presentations from teachers are too long, a few pupils find it difficult to concentrate and contribute effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Children of Reception age experience the appropriate range of learning opportunities as they work alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, although the school has limited outdoor play equipment for them. Provision for swimming is good. Visitors to school enrich the curriculum well and activities outside lessons are good. Information to parents regarding the curriculum is limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Early identification of special educational needs enables staff to set targets and plan appropriately. Progress is monitored regularly. The school works in close partnership with parents and other agencies to ensure the right help is provided to support each child.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development throughout the school is excellent. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Adults in the school act as very positive role models and expectations for pupils to learn from this are very high.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Provision for child protection and pupils' welfare is very good. Assessment procedures in the core subjects and ICT are very good. Assessment in the other curriculum subjects is informal but satisfactory. Reports to parents about their child's progress do not highlight targets that pupils need to work towards.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good management and leadership from the headteacher result in effective teamwork among the staff. The arrangements for managing the different year groups, with only three full time teachers, work effectively. The school's aims to create a happy caring school where pupils are encouraged to work hard are achieved very well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effectively involved in the work of the school. They understand its strengths and areas for development well. They monitor the school's performance and financial resources well. Governors' Annual Report to parents has some weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good evaluation of test results and other information are used to monitor pupils' progress and identify areas for development. The school is fully aware of what needs to be done to raise its performance, and the development plan is used effectively to steer improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school maximises its very tight resources to ensure it achieves 'best value' in all its work. Spending is targeted very carefully to improve the environment and develop the curriculum. The school acknowledges the urgent need to recruit support staff to help pupils' of Reception age and those with special educational needs. Value for money is good value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school, behave well and take good care of each other.• Teaching is good and the school expects children to work hard and do their best and they make good progress.• The school is led and managed well.• The school is successful in enabling children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quantity of homework their children receive.• Closer relationships with parents including improved communications regarding information.• The range and availability of activities that the school provides outside lessons.

The inspection team fully endorses the parents' positive views. Opportunities to provide better curriculum information and engage with parents more effectively are being considered. Parents are regularly invited to help in school. Some do so regularly. Homework levels are in line with other schools. The school provides a good range of activities outside lessons for pupils in the junior classes and, whilst there are fewer opportunities for children in the infants, this is similar to other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

All pupils make good progress and standards are above average overall. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics.

1. Since the previous inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science have improved above the national trend. Results from the National Curriculum Tests and assessments are generally well above average in Year 6, in English, mathematics and science. In 2002, results in English and mathematics were very high because of the increased numbers of pupils attaining the higher Level 5, compared to those achieving this level in science. This was a particularly strong year group. The school has sustained well above average standards in all three subjects in the last two years. Progress over all the subjects is always at least good for the vast majority of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well generally, because time and attention is given to support each individual pupil to reach targets in their individual education plans. Teachers know their pupils well and maintain high expectations as pupils progress through the school. The current Year 6 cohort is in line to achieve well above average standards in English and mathematics.
2. The school has not enjoyed similar success in the infants where standards have fluctuated quite considerably from year to year. One key factor in this is that the year groups are very small and so every pupil represents a high percentage, (up to 20% of the year group) when looking at comparisons with national data. The school has also had three different teachers in the infant classes over the last three years and this has not helped ensure continuity in pupils' learning as they move from Reception to Year 2. The school is now confident the situation is resolved. Attainment for pupils in the current Year 2 is broadly average, although speaking and listening skills are above what is normally seen for pupils at this age. As a result of good teaching from their new teacher, this year group, of only five pupils, has made good gains in the last year.
3. Whilst the overall attainment on entry is generally above average, it does fluctuate considerably depending on the numbers of pupils who, in any year group, may be identified as having special educational needs or to be very able. The lowest attaining pupils achieve broadly average standards, whereas the highest attaining pupils achieve very high standards. Any variations in standards that occur from year to year are attributable to the relative size of the cohorts in the year groups and the proportion of children identified as having special educational needs. In addition, the school has a relatively high number of pupils who enter the school at times other than the Foundation Stage. The pupils who start in the school in their Reception year make consistently good progress, and many make very good progress in the core subjects especially by the time they enter the upper junior class. A few, who start very late in the junior years, do not always benefit fully from all that the school offers to promote high aspirations. However, the school places great emphasis on ensuring the effective integration of children of all abilities. Gains made in standards reflect the school's good assessment and monitoring procedures. This monitoring has highlighted the need to improve pupils' writing skills across the school and reading skills in the infant class, where pupils attained particular low standards in the tests in 2002. Effective strategies are in place to review the progress of individual pupils and the teachers meet regularly to consider actions that need to be taken to improve provision. ICT skills are built in well to teaching, especially for pupils to conduct independent work and standards here are above average.
4. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress as they work alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 and are on target to attain and exceed all of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Generally, work is matched well to their needs, and most children are confident to embark on literacy and numeracy work that is above the level expected for their age before they enter Year 1. They enjoy a wide range of good opportunities to talk and explore ideas, and they are generally very keen to please, seeking help and attention confidently when they are unable to do what is required. For example, in a very busy but well planned lesson, the Reception age

children settled to working with a volunteer helper to discuss and sequence the life cycle of a frog. By the end of the session they were quite clear about the order of events and talked confidently about their observations. In literacy and numeracy time, most children concentrate well and apply prior learning effectively in new work. For example, in a literacy lesson in the infant class pupils all listened attentively to a 'silly' story and enjoyed the humour. The Year 2 pupils articulated well why they found certain elements particularly funny and the youngest pupils identified individual words that made them laugh, especially words that had 'funny sounds' or images of the 'silly' goats climbing over the fridge! The teacher aimed questions to different ability and age groups skilfully and Reception age children demonstrated above average skills in their literacy. Many of them are confident and articulate, and demonstrate a good range of vocabulary when talking or writing their ideas down. When reading together, many in this class read well, learning from each other skills of expression and interpretation which they apply well following the teacher's good modelling. Children do particularly well when directly supported by the teacher or volunteers.

5. Reading has been an area of focus and overall standards are in line with expectations for Year 2, but are above for those pupils in Year 1. Very good attention has been given to develop phonic skills and shared reading in order to develop skills well. Listening skills are of very good standard and pupils are encouraged to express ideas and offer suggestions in the shared class activities. Pupils, who are less confident, are supported patiently by staff and peers, and individual help is given to enable them to achieve well. Pupils learn a range of strategies to solve problems and acquire secure approaches to calculating number operations, both in effective oral sessions and in practical exercises. The teacher is aware that some pupils need individual attention because they have not fully assimilated some of their mathematical skills from previous years, where teaching in this area has not been strong. The subject is on his action plan for improvement, but the lack of additional support in the classroom, on a regular basis, is an issue he recognises. There are gaps in pupils' learning as a result of staff changes in the last three years. From assessment evidence from the start of their Year 2, these pupils have made good progress.
6. By the end of Year 6, standards in English are well above average, an improvement since the last inspection. By the age of eleven, pupils have well above average reading skills and they read with fluency and expression. Pupils read confidently, drawing relevant information from texts to support their ideas, for example, in looking at symbolism in religious education and exploring what it was like to be the working class poor in Victorian times. The pupils use a wide vocabulary in their factual accounts and their story telling. Their reading skills are used effectively to research topics and discover different viewpoints. Effective use of books and ICT facilities enable those pupils who are really keen to go beyond the tasks set.
7. Standards in mathematics for current pupils are well above average by the end of Year 6 and this also is an improvement since the last report, when standards were above the national average. The school has implemented the numeracy strategy well and improvement in the subject has been good. Pupils acquire a good understanding of the key processes they need to apply in various contexts and take care to work answers out accurately and with reasonable explanations. Number skills, including mental mathematics, are particularly good and pupils enjoy the challenge rapid thinking provides in the sessions at the start of numeracy lessons. A few struggle to apply their learning effectively when work is presented in a different format, as seen in the numeracy lesson in the Year 5/6 class, where the question was phrased in a way pupils were not familiar with. However, pupils are highly motivated and, with support, they worked at the problem diligently. The use of ICT to support data handling and recording has improved since the last inspection.
8. Standards in science for current pupils are also above average by the time they reach the end of Year 6 and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Development of the subject has been good. From the infants onwards, pupils are challenged to think carefully about their ideas and offer explanations for their answers. Although the pupils in the Year 2 science lesson had not designed their investigation on woodlice, they explained well what the investigation had to test

because they had previously looked at the habitats in the school grounds. High expectations support learning effectively, and the highest attaining pupils enjoy finding out more about topics in their own time. For example, pupils in the Year 5/6 class were set a puzzle to design an investigation to prove or disprove a hypothesis. The task made them think and apply what they already knew and, although a few struggled with the logical thinking, they enjoyed being challenged. They articulate well reasoned arguments for their responses and are confident in their presentations. Effective use is made of ICT to support teaching, and pupils carry out recording and research tasks using computers regularly.

9. Although there was insufficient time to look in detail at other subjects, evidence of the work seen indicates that standards by the end of Year 6, are above those normally expected in history, geography and art and design. For example, the observational drawings of photographic equipment in the Year 5/6 class were detailed and effectively completed with subtle shading and limited use of colour to depict a particular style appropriate to the apparatus. The guitar and orchestral playing in the assembly was of a good standard and the unaccompanied singing was melodic and tuneful. Teaching in physical education is enhanced by having an on-site pool, which is used extensively in the summer term so that all pupils have the opportunity to swim confidently before they leave the school. Swimming is taught well and this ensures good standards.

The overall quality of teaching is good, supported well by good assessment procedures and effective target setting for individual pupils.

10. The overall quality of teaching is good. This good teaching is largely due to the effective leadership and management of the mixed age classes. Each teacher takes a broad overview of the work that pupils have to cover and lesson plans ensure that learning builds on their prior work effectively. Teachers are keen to help pupils achieve well, and pupils appreciate all that the school does for them by responding very positively at all times. They speak highly of their teachers and show a keenness to please, seeking help and guidance confidently when unclear about what they have to do. Key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught very well, and mathematics teaching is a particular strength in the upper junior class. This is a major factor that contributes to the high standards pupils generally achieve. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good although, currently, in the absence of any support staff, the duty falls on the class teacher. This limits the progress these pupils sometimes make in some lessons where the work is challenging or where they need extra guidance to remain on task and sustain concentration. Higher attaining pupils have been identified successfully and teachers ensure additional work is set to challenge these pupils well.
11. Since the last inspection, work schemes have been reviewed in light of the national numeracy and literacy strategies and the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been updated. Because of the mixed age classes, teachers' planning pays due attention to the development of skills as well as ensuring knowledge and understanding develop well for pupils of all ages and abilities. Pupils generally understand well what they are learning and why and because teachers know each child well, work is usually well matched to needs. Occasionally, when this does not happen or when the same lesson is presented to all pupils, the lower attaining pupils make slower progress because the work is too challenging and the highest attaining pupils find the work too easy. However, teachers recognise this and extension work or additional guidance is offered as the lessons progress. On occasions older pupils or the more able pupils are partnered with those who need support and this helps ensure good progress. Good examples of this were seen in the music lesson in the infants' class and the science lesson in the Year 5/6 class.
12. Teachers' presentations are generally clear and well thought through, with good opportunities for question answer sessions to check pupils' understanding. In the Year 3/4 class the teacher's introduction to the work on Ancient Egypt fired up pupils' enthusiasm and they were eager to start exploring the Internet and books for further information. Skilful questioning guides pupils to think carefully about what they already know and apply this to new situations. Teachers encourage

children to listen and talk from when they start school and the majority of pupils enjoy these dialogues. The relationships between older and younger pupils and between pupils of differing abilities are fostered well. Subtle touches of humour and fun liven up learning and develop pupils' confidence and relationships with their teachers. Teachers often try to link work between subjects to make learning more cohesive. For example, pupils in the infant class have explored mini-beast habitats and re-created these in the classroom to observe characteristics more closely. They have also continued these observations into artwork and drawn creatures using an appropriate ICT program. Work in science in the junior classes links effectively to the school's programme for personal, health, social and citizenship education and pupils are aware of the reasons why, for example, a healthy diet or exercise are important in their lives. The swimming session seen was lively and entertaining as well as very instructive.

13. Teachers know the pupils well because the school is very small and, as each year group starts, good attention is paid to assess their capability and construct teaching to meet individual needs. Effective use is made of day-to-day assessment to plan lessons and as pupils remain in the same class for two to three years, their progress is measured carefully, especially in the key skills and core subjects. Targets are set for every child and reviewed at least termly to check pupils are on course to achieve well. Where there are concerns, additional assessments take place and parents are informed if there are any issues. Marking is supportive and constructive, giving guidance as to how pupils might improve their work, but more effective is the individual feedback pupils receive as teachers work with them in lessons. Information about pupils in each class is passed to the teacher they move on to, and is regularly shared with parents. Standards have improved because, as a result of this monitoring, a clear picture builds up of pupils' achievements, and of curriculum areas where more work may be required to improve teaching and learning. For example, reading has been a priority in the infant classes this year and writing is continually being worked at across all subjects to reinforce skills pupils learn in their literacy lessons.
14. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Lessons are generally interesting, involve all pupils appropriately and every child is made aware of the expectations placed upon them to work hard. In the lessons judged to be satisfactory, a few pupils failed to sustain interest and concentration because the lesson lacked pace and, for a few, the work was too easy. A few lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs struggled particularly with trying to understand what they were required to do. However, the pace of lessons is generally good. Teachers place good emphasis on pupils' learning to think for themselves, and developing good organisational skills so that they can work independently. This was evident in the lessons in the upper junior class where the teacher was then able to support individual pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage are shown, and then regularly encouraged, to organise themselves and get on sensibly and efficiently with the activities provided. This is particularly important when no additional adult support is available to lead and direct them whilst the teacher works directly with another age group. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they are expected to plan their own time in which to complete tasks, and work with others where appropriate.
15. Pupils are diligent in their studies, and are keen to learn. For example, eleven are learning to play the guitar and others take an active interest in learning to play other instruments so that they can perform in the school assemblies and on other occasions. Very good behaviour and genuine enthusiasm for school help pupils remain interested. They enjoy being praised, and show respect for each other by listening to everyone's contributions during class discussions and offering constructive help to each other.

Good leadership and management from the headteacher result in effective teamwork whereby all members of the school community, including parents and governors, play a valuable part in the work of the school.

16. The headteacher took on board the challenges identified by the previous inspection and has led the school effectively in addressing all the key issues presented. School improvement has been good

and standards in the core subjects have been raised effectively. In close partnership with staff and governors, he has enabled the school to provide a good standard of education, within an environment where children feel happy well and secure. Parents acknowledge the quality of education their children receive and are happy with what the school provides. The headteacher's commitment aligned with his clear understanding of what needs to be done, have established him as a positive role model within the community.

17. All staff carry substantial responsibilities in leading their classes and everyone makes good contributions to the development of their areas. For example, the infants' teacher, who was new to the school this year, carried out a full review of the aspects that needed addressing in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. He has drawn up a well thought through action plan setting out priorities for raising standards at Key Stage 1. The teaching team meets regularly to review the curriculum and staff development issues. Within this tight team the regular review of planning, teaching and learning gives all of them a clear view of standards and progress especially in the core subjects. Assessment procedures are used well to help teachers set appropriate targets for improvement, and this practice effectively supports the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science.
18. The management of provision for special educational needs is very good with good records kept updated to ensure pupils are monitored carefully and helped to make gains in the areas they have weaknesses. Parents are kept fully informed of pupils' progress and external help is sought, when necessary. Provision is satisfactory, although there is no additional support to assist teachers in the classroom especially with tasks that challenge pupils or to offer regular practice, for example, with reading.
19. The governing body carries out its role well. Governors take a keen interest in the welfare and development of staff and pupils, and are very committed to supporting the work of the school. A good number are parents of children in the school and active members of the local community and school's friends' association. Governors regularly visit the school to see children at work and engage in constructive dialogue with staff. In this way they have a good overview of the day-to-day work in the school and are tuned into any concerns and issues staff or parents might have. For example, the parents' concerns regarding communication between home and school are continually reviewed and governors are looking to revise information that is presented to parents new to the school in order to clarify the routines and activities their children will experience. The quality of some of the information, including the Governors' Annual Report to parents is currently unsatisfactory. Governors understand well the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, they are very conscious the school has no support staff at present and have this in hand to resolve before the coming academic year. Governors ensure the school development plan, that they are instrumental in devising, has adequate resources allocated in order to be implemented effectively. Because the school is very small and numbers of pupils on roll from year to year cannot always be ascertained in advance because the community is fairly mobile, budgeting is a critical issue and the headteacher and governors monitor spending very closely. Wherever possible, governors seek additional grants and funding, all of which are then used effectively to improvement provision in the school.
20. Support from parents is essential to the school to ensure the school continues to retain its good standing in the area as a 'family' school. A few help regularly in school and a good number are keen to assist in social activities and fund raising. This help is much appreciated, especially in supporting pupils' individual reading skills and work in practical activities and for raising funds that are always welcome to provide more equipment and books. There are opportunities for more involvement in order to support out of school activities and the school regularly invites parents to suggest ways that they can be involved.
21. The school reviews its performance regularly and sets challenging but achievable targets. The commitment to meet the needs of each child is very good, reinforcing the school's clear principles

to provide a secure happy environment where all pupils can achieve well. The internal environment is attractive and is being suitably adapted to accommodate pupils with physical disabilities. The school works efficiently within the confines of a very tight budget and fluctuating numbers on roll from year to year. Value for money is good.

As a result of the overall very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' personal development is excellent.

22. Fulstow is a very happy school where excellent relationships and very good attitudes and behaviour have a striking effect on the way that pupils learn. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and show very high levels of interest in everything they do. They thrive on the excellent relationships throughout the school both with staff and with each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is subsumed into the whole ethos of the school and pupils develop a very good awareness of themselves and others as they move through the school.
23. Children of all ages are very keen to settle down each morning and, encouraged by their teachers, often bring in items from home to show the class. This reinforces the school's aim to create a 'family' atmosphere within the school, where time is given to share with pupils what matters to them outside school. Because of this trust and respect the school fosters, pupils are keen to join in discussions and their hands frequently shoot up in reply to teachers' questioning. In some lessons it is clear that pupils have been stimulated by the content of a lesson and this has encouraged them to continue their own research at home. This was apparent in a Year 3/4 lesson on Ancient Egypt where several pupils had made their own investigations on the Internet and were eager to tell the class about what they had discovered. There is a keenness to learn amongst many of the pupils. Work in various topics introduces pupils effectively to a range of cultural experiences so that they understand how people in different times or different parts of the world live. Work in geography, religious education, history, art and design and music all contribute effectively to pupils' good cultural awareness. Trips to places of interest and regular visitors to the school, including artists and musicians, add to pupils' positive experiences. Pupils are very aware of environmental and health issues. They consider the implications of such issues on their lives in a very mature manner. Because of the location of the school, it is difficult to introduce pupils to the broader picture of the multicultural society in Britain very effectively. But wherever possible, teachers encourage pupils to reflect on this through work that they do in literacy and history, when they read and discuss articles and multimedia accounts of life in this country in the past and present.
24. Lessons are prepared well and this helps pupils to focus and engage quickly and enthusiastically. This was evident in the literacy lesson in the infants' class on rhyming words, where pupils could not wait to express their ideas and where even the youngest Reception children listened attentively. Their eagerness to contribute, coupled with their keenness to explore new words reinforces their ability to reflect on what they hear effectively. In Year 5/6 lessons, the teacher's good use of humour grabs pupils' attention and makes them very responsive and co-operative. Opportunities for such relaxed social interactions add very positively to pupils' self esteem and confidence. They understand when it is acceptable to engage in light conversations and when to switch back to seriousness in their work. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have gained considerably in their maturity and general good demeanour.
25. These very good attitudes to school life continue in whole school activities, such as assemblies and lunchtimes. Assemblies are regarded as special times and the atmosphere created of gentleness and calm enhances pupils' spiritual development very effectively. In both of the assemblies observed during the inspection, the teacher actively encouraged pupils' contributions with a smile, thus persuading pupils of all ages to participate. Pupils listened very attentively, joined in the discussion about friendship, and sang hymns and said prayers respectfully. Through such sensitive presentations, pupils become very aware of the wider world and frequent fund raising and charity days encourage their understanding of why it is important to consider the needs of others. At lunchtime pupils chat together amicably and take it in turns to wipe the tables down and clear up.

All this happens in a very calm and friendly atmosphere. Behaviour is very good throughout the school and there are no signs of bullying.

26. There are excellent relationships throughout the school; all adults are kind and friendly without their authority being undermined. Such positive relationships mean that teachers and pupils both respect and get the most from each other. Pupils are both polite and kind to staff and to each other. They get on well together in lessons, supporting one another and listening attentively when other classmates are speaking. They take turns happily and willingly share resources. Even the very youngest children in Reception show commendable self-assurance and co-operation because of the strength of the relationships they have with older pupils and with the adults who help them. These excellent relationships continue in the playground where a particular feature of the school is the way boys and girls of all ages play happily together. Pupils are clearly proud of each other's achievements. One boy introduced his friend to an inspector, eagerly adding that his friend played football very well and had recently joined a local football team.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The level of support for children in their Reception year and for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school.

27. The school currently has no educational support staff to assist teachers in the classroom. Parents also raised this as a concern at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. Unforeseen budget constraints have led to this situation in the recent past but the school has tackled the problem and is on course to ensure some limited support will be available in the new term. Children in the Foundation Stage have limited access to outdoor play because not only are resources for this area of learning limited but in addition no additional support is at hand to supervise children in and out of the classroom. Opportunities for individual support or support for the Reception age children is limited when the class teacher is directing his attention to pupils in Years 1 and 2. The youngest children manage well to work independently but sometimes, especially if children have limited concentration and self-motivation is not fully embedded and they need re-assurance or attention, it is difficult to gain this without detriment to others. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school also have to rely solely on the class teacher to support them when they need help with their work. Teachers are very aware of the needs of these pupils and accommodate them as well as possible whilst ensuring all the others in the class also have fair attention. Occasionally, when work is challenging and pupils with special educational needs fail to grasp new information clearly, extra help is not always immediately available. Regular practice, for example, listening to pupils read or assessing their needs during presentations in class is limited.

The quality of some of the information that parents receive from the school.

28. A few parents who attended the parents' meeting and some who responded to the questionnaires indicated they would like to see more information regarding work their children do in school in order that they might help them more effectively at home. The school is looking at revising the information they provide for parents who are new to the school, especially for those whose children are new to the Reception class. This information is currently limited. Teachers sometimes send curriculum information home regarding the topics and subject content pupils will cover in lessons. This practice is not consistent but is useful to keep parents' informed. Although the school provides annual written reports to parents' regarding their children's progress, which include good comments regarding personal development and behaviour, they do not give a clear picture of attainment in the various subjects. The reports include details of the work that is covered and tend to be rather descriptive. Strengths and targets for improvement are not always clearly defined. The Governors' Annual Report to parents does not give a robust overview of the school from year to year. Information is minimal and does not explain in sufficient detail, for

example, the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs or the school's achievements or how good these are in relation to the national picture.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. The school is effective in delivering a good standard of education to its pupils. In order to improve further the staff and governors should:

1. Provide educational support staff to:

- assist in the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage;
- work with pupils with special educational needs who need regular guidance during lessons.

(See particularly paragraphs: 1, 5, 11, 14, 19, 27)

2. Improve the quality of information parents receive by:

- including more detailed and up to date information in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents;
- providing parents with better induction and on going information about what work their children do in lessons;
- sharing targets that have been set in the annual written reports regarding their child.

(See particularly paragraphs: 17, 19, and 26)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	8	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	23	62	15	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than seven percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	59
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		10

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

(Some columns remain blank where figures are 10 or less)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	3	8

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	5	7	6
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (91)	88 (91)	75 (82)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	8	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (91)	88 (82)	100 (82)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	11	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (100)	100 (100)	91 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	9	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (78)	91 (100)	91 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	59	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9
Average class size	19.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2002-3
	£
Total income	147340
Total expenditure	156398
Expenditure per pupil	2522
Balance brought forward from previous year	20220
Balance carried forward to next year	11250

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY OF PARENTS AND CARERS.

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	59
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	38	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	44	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	26	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	44	14	8	0
The teaching is good.	68	30	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	44	6	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	42	0	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	46	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	74	24	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	36	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	36	28	2	0

Other issues raised by parents at the parents' meeting.

Parents were not clear as to why the learning support assistant and the part-time music teacher were no longer working in the school. The Chair of Governors, also a parent, explained the budget constraints that had led to this situation and the school was hoping to address this as soon as possible with respect to support staff.