



Fen Ditton Community Primary

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 110605
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278467
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 30 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Nelson LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Horningsea Road
School category	Community		CB5 8SZ
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223 292342
Number on roll	150	Fax number	01223 294790
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Nick Argue
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Jenny Russon

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 29 November 2005 - 30 November 2005	Inspection number 278467
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average sized and serves the villages of Fen Ditton and Horningsea, including a large housing estate. Around half the pupils come from beyond the immediate area. An average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals, although the school serves an area where there is significant social and economic deprivation. There are average numbers of pupils with additional learning needs. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Children start school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. It has improved very well since the last inspection, with rising standards at Year 6 that are consistently above or well above average. There have also been excellent improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) and the school is very well placed to continue improving. Children in the reception class get an excellent start to their school life because of the outstanding teaching they receive. They reach the goals expected for their age except for literacy and numeracy. Teaching throughout Years 1 to 6 is never less than good and is often outstanding so that pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and learning. Those who find learning difficult make exceptional progress because of the excellent support they receive. The vast majority of pupils behave exceptionally well and have excellent attitudes to learning. However, attendance is slightly below average. The school's success is the result of outstanding leadership based on the belief that every child matters. This ensures that all children, whatever their ability, background or need, are included in the whole life of the school. This excellent caring ethos is common to all staff and governors and driven by the headteacher who has gathered a first rate team to the school. Parents recognise how good the school is and one commented, 'A really good school - very caring and good teaching'. The school has an accurate picture of how well it is doing that coincides with that of the inspectors. It has identified accurately aspects of writing, the use of subtraction, and attendance as key priorities for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to help pupils to improve their handwriting, their ability to write more detailed and interesting sentences, and their use of subtraction in solving mathematical problems. - Continue to work closely with those families that find it difficult to ensure their children attend regularly, and those that take holidays in term time, to improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Children start school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Many have particularly poor literacy and numeracy skills. Excellent teaching in the reception class ensures that children reach the expected goals in physical, creative, and personal development but because of their lower starting points not in literacy and numeracy. Pupils continue to make excellent progress through Years 1 to 6 to reach standards that are consistently above or well above average. Standards at Year 6 have risen well over recent years. Pupils who find learning difficult make exceptionally good progress because of the excellent support they receive, particularly from teaching assistants. Although pupils achieve so well overall the school has identified some weaknesses in their handwriting, in their ability to write more detailed and interesting sentences and in their use of subtraction. The support the

school has provided is already beginning to improve these areas. The school exceeded its targets in the 2005 national tests at Year 6 and has now introduced a computer based system to track pupils' progress and ensure that future targets are more challenging than those set for 2005 which were not challenging enough. The school's very strong emphasis on meeting the needs of all pupils, whatever their ability, gender or background ensures that they all achieve similarly and there is no underachievement. The great improvement in resources and teaching in ICT over recent years has led to good standards and achievement by Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The behaviour of the vast majority is exemplary. One or two have difficulty with behaviour and the school handles these pupils very well. Their parents appreciate the support they receive. Pupils enjoy their lessons and have excellent attitudes to learning. Attendance is below average, mainly because a very small number of families have difficulty in ensuring their children attend regularly, and some take holidays in term time. The school has taken steps to address these issues and attendance has begun to improve. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities to develop healthy lifestyles by enjoying the wide range of sporting activities the school offers, and having fruit for snacks. They know how to stay safe because the school teaches this well through the programme for personal, social and health education and through links with outside agencies like the police. They acquire very good skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT that help to prepare them for the world of work. Pupils enjoy excellent opportunities to contribute to the school and to the wider community. Older pupils play a key role in supporting younger ones, and the active school council makes sure staff know what pupils think about the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Lessons are planned very well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers manage their classes very successfully to ensure that pupils stay focused on their learning. Many use lively teaching styles to capture pupils' interest, for example, when illustrating characters to help pupils' story writing. This leads to great enjoyment of learning and very good progress. Teachers use questions effectively to encourage pupils to contribute their ideas, although, occasionally, the learning of more able pupils is not always extended enough by more complex questions. The school has very good procedures for checking how well pupils are achieving. They have improved considerably since the last inspection, for example, in physical education and ICT. Teachers use these procedures well to guide their teaching and extend pupils' skills. Teachers mark pupils' work in detail to identify what has been successful and what needs to be

improved. Pupils are given opportunities to understand the teachers' comments and to apply them in follow-up work. This results in higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent range of rich learning experiences that meet pupils' needs very well, especially those who find learning difficult. Teachers plan their topics carefully to ensure that pupils in mixed-age classes build successfully on earlier learning. Effective links between subjects make learning relevant and reinforce basic skills, particularly in ICT. The school makes very good use of visitors to extend pupils' learning. For example, they really enjoyed demonstrations from Cambridge University scientists, and the visit by teachers from their link school in Ghana. Very good links with local community organisations have resulted in French lessons being included and there is a broad range of very well attended out-of-school clubs. Pupils' enjoyment of school was clearly evident when they talked excitedly about their music and drama performance and annual residential trip.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and provide outstanding care and support that are valued highly by parents and pupils. There are robust systems for ensuring pupils' safety and security; for example, rigorous child protection arrangements and the vetting of all adults who work in the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school and that there are very few incidents of bullying or harassment. Teaching and support staff work very successfully together, with the help of outside agencies, to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need, particularly those who find learning hard. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are given good guidance to improve the standard of their work through the effective use of personal and group targets in literacy and numeracy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are excellent. The governors, headteacher and staff have a very accurate understanding of how well the school is doing, what it needs to do to improve even further and how to achieve those improvements. This is because the school has very secure systems for checking its performance, which include seeking and acting upon the views of parents and pupils. The school has the resources it needs to continue to improve. This is shown in the improvements since the last inspection. Teachers in charge of subjects have a clear understanding of how well their subjects are doing, and leadership for pupils who find learning difficult is excellent so that they make exceptional progress. Parents recognise how good the school is with comments like, 'I feel we are very lucky to have a school of such quality on our doorstep'. The school benefits from good resources and accommodation which it would like to improve

further through the replacement of the temporary classrooms with permanent ones. It has carried forward a larger than usual budget surplus towards such developments. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy, senior leadership team and governors, is the main key to the school's success.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	NA
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we thought of your school. We think you go to an excellent school. All the adults who work with you care for you so that you always have someone to turn to if you are worried. We were impressed by the way you older ones cared for younger children too. The teachers do an excellent job of helping you to learn so that you do very well in the national tests at Year 6. We think the children in the reception get an excellent start to their school life. Those of you who find learning hard get lots of support so that you make excellent progress. The vast majority of you behave exceptionally well. You told us that you thoroughly enjoy your lessons and the after school and lunch time clubs the school arranges. Your school council does a splendid job of letting the teachers know what you think about the school and how it could be better. In order to make your school even better we have asked your teachers to help you to improve your handwriting. We have also asked them to help you to write more interesting sentences and to get better at subtraction. We also think the staff should continue to encourage you all to attend school regularly and not to take time off unless you are really poorly.