



Fernvale Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119967
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280700
Inspection dates 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Weston HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Somerby Road
School category	Community		Thurnby
Age range of pupils	4 to 10		Leicester, Leicestershire LE7 9PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0116 2416722
Number on roll	187	Fax number	0116 2416722
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Chris Obern
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Helen Elliott

Age group 4 to 10	Inspection dates 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	Inspection number 280700
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Fernvale is a small rural school in the village of Thurnby, close to Leicester. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. There are a similar number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and for whom English is an additional language (EAL), to that found nationally. There are an average number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. There are more boys than girls. Pupils transfer at the end of Year 5 to the local high school. The school has received national awards as an Investor in People and Eco School in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides well for its pupils and gives good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's view of its overall effectiveness. There are many strengths. It is a welcoming school where pupils are happy and well behaved in lessons. There are positive relationships throughout school and pupils have good opportunities for taking responsibility. The school takes good account of the views of parents and pupils. They hold the school in high regard. One said, 'The school offers an excellent environment for children to learn and grow'; another commented, 'the staff are friendly, approachable and dedicated'. The headteacher leads the school very well and has built an effective team which works hard to provide a high quality education for the pupils. There is an enthusiasm and capability to drive the school forward. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage where most make good progress. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 5, standards overall are above average. However, the school recognises the need to increase the challenge for some pupils in Key Stage 2 by setting clear targets for improvement and reviewing them regularly. Good leadership and management have successfully raised standards in English, mathematics and science. The school recognises that the next steps are to develop the curriculum further, improve presentation and handwriting throughout the school and ensure that marking helps pupils understand the next steps in their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the use of long-term individual targets to raise expectations and support teachers in checking progress, especially for higher attainers and those who are gifted and talented.
- Develop the curriculum further so that pupils are given more opportunity to be creative and active in their learning.
- Ensure marking consistently gives pupils feedback on how they can improve their work.
- Improve the neatness of pupils' handwriting and presentation throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils are achieving well. Standards on entry to school are below average. From the outset in the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' needs are well met and as a result they make good progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and independence skills. Standards at the start of Year 1 are average overall.

Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3-5 consolidate their understanding. However, the school recognises the need to increase rates of progress for pupils, especially those who are bright or gifted and talented. It has begun to set clear targets to expect more of these pupils. By the end of Year 5, most reach standards above those expected for their age in English,

mathematics and science. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well, with particularly effective programmes being used to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is a friendly and harmonious community where the quality of the pupils' personal development is good, and in some aspects, outstanding. Mutual respect and very good behaviour are evident throughout the school. Pupils have a good attitude towards school life and enjoy their learning. The school council plays an important role; its elected members meet regularly to discuss and suggest initiatives and improvements. They also ensure that younger pupils have a 'buddy' to play with. The pupils are kind to one another and feel safe and confident. Pupils are encouraged to follow a healthy lifestyle and there is a broad programme to promote physical fitness and well-being, including the provision of specialist sports coaches, swimming sessions and short 'huff and puff' exercise sessions. The school's Eco-Rangers provide outstanding support for recycling and energy saving schemes. Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good. Through curriculum work, they become skilled at knowing how to reflect and consider the feelings of others and they learn skills which prepare them well for their future life and work. All Year 5 pupils have a community responsibility such as setting out equipment at break times. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils arrive promptly at the start of the school day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall. In the best teaching, pupils are given a clear understanding of what they will learn during a session and how this fits into their previous learning. Explanations and instructions are clear and effective. Questioning is used well to assess pupils' understanding and they are encouraged to express their ideas. In some lessons, pupils are arranged in ability groups and this increases the level of challenge.

Pupils are encouraged to work together and discuss their ideas, which enhance the overall learning experience. Teachers have clear classroom rules that are consistently followed and these contribute to the good working atmosphere. Throughout the school adults are very positive with the pupils and encourage them through praise and constructive comments. Where teaching is satisfactory, teacher-led activities are too long leaving limited time for the pupils to work independently or in small groups. In some curriculum subjects, there is an over-reliance on pre-printed handouts resulting in a lower level of challenge. Work in books is often presented without sufficient care and handwriting skills are underdeveloped. This detracts from the quality of the content. The school recognises this and has plans to address it. Learning support

assistants work well alongside teachers in the classrooms and with small groups in other parts of the school. They make an outstanding contribution to pupils' learning and provide very good support to those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. It successfully underpins pupils' progress although the level of challenge in subjects other than literacy and numeracy could be better developed. Currently, opportunities for pupils to be creative and active in their learning are limited. It is keen to use good practice evident in the curriculum for the youngest pupils to influence work across all year groups. The school is about to restructure the curriculum and inspectors agree that this is an appropriate priority. Teachers often link subjects together effectively. Plans to provide Broadband connectivity will further enhance these opportunities. The curriculum is successfully enriched by a wide variety of out of school activities which complement the school's fitness and health agenda well. Home-school learning logs effectively support work done in class and clear targets appropriately inform parents of expectations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All members of staff have a genuine concern for the pupils' welfare and provide very good care. The school has good procedures in aspects of health and safety and the staff are well trained in the area of child protection. There are very good systems to help pupils who have difficulties in their learning. Parents and pupils are invited to contribute to individual education plans and targets. There is a good range of support strategies available for the pupils which enable those with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress.

The good relationships within the school produce confident learners who are happy to explain their ideas and contribute to the well-being of the wider community. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, little guidance is given by the teacher on how pupils can improve and achieve the next steps in their learning. However, pupils do have written targets that are effectively linked to home-school learning logs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision and gives a strong sense of direction, with a well articulated focus on raising standards and on promoting the care and well-being of pupils. She is well supported by her deputy and subject leaders, who have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders have begun to increase the level of challenge for some pupils in Key Stage 2 by setting clear targets for improvement. These now need to be reviewed regularly and any findings addressed appropriately. The school is well

managed and runs smoothly, enabling teachers to focus on pupils' learning. The school makes good use of all of its resources, including staff who are deployed effectively. Information from analysis and reviews is used well by the headteacher and subject leaders to establish sensible priorities and target improvement. These are appropriately included in the school development plan. There are effective procedures to involve all staff and governors in evaluating the work of the school. Parents' views are regularly taken into account and they hold the school in high regard. Governors are committed to the school and support it well. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold it to account has grown and they play a full role in support of the school. For example, they have set up useful links with subject leaders, to help them evaluate the quality of education being provided. The governing body ensures that all legal requirements are met.

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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	Yes
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 letting us visit your school. We enjoyed talking with you, watching you learn and looking at your work. We thought you would like to hear what we liked about your school and how it could get even better.

What we liked about your school

- You are friendly and confident, and happy to talk about what you are doing.
- You behave well in lessons and enjoy what you do, especially when you are working together or have practical activities to do.
- You have some good ideas about how the school can improve.
- Your headteacher and other grown-ups working in the school look after you and make sure that everyone behaves well and is happy. This helps you get on in lessons.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make their teaching even better, and to get it right for each one of you.
- Your parents like the school and feel you learn well.

What we have asked your school to do to make it even better

- Your teachers need to give you more opportunities to be creative and active in your learning.
- Your teachers should challenge older pupils to do even better by setting clear targets and checking up how well you are doing.
- When marking your work, your teachers should tell you exactly what you need to do to improve.
- You should try harder to make your handwriting and presentation neater.

We feel certain that everyone at the school will continue to work hard to help you learn in the future. Good luck.