



Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122034
LEA Northamptonshire
Inspection number 285549
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 28 June 2006
Reporting inspector Liz Kounnou Al

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Wellingborough Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Finedon
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN9 5JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01933 680433
Number on roll	169	Fax number	01933 680433
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	8 September 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Linda McLean

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
7 to 11	27 June 2006 - 28 June 2006	285549

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Finedon Mulso is smaller than the average sized school, and serves a mixed catchment area. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is lower than average despite some local economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is slightly below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because standards are too low and progress is unsatisfactory in English, mathematics and science. Although leadership and management are improving because of the changes the new headteacher is introducing to the school, these are not yet having enough impact. As a result, the school has not demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to bring about the necessary improvements. It is failing to provide satisfactory value for money. The school has not improved since the last inspection when serious weaknesses were identified. This is mainly because of the many changes in leadership and staffing since 2003.

The school's own view is that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory but it does recognise that standards are not high enough, and that teaching and learning need to be improved. The systems for checking how well the school is doing are insufficiently rigorous and expectations of what pupils should achieve are not high enough. Pupils' targets for learning do not take enough account of their prior attainment. As a result, the curriculum is not suitably challenging for many of the pupils and this leads to underachievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards throughout the school in English, mathematics and science and ensure that pupils' targets for learning take full account of their prior attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, ensuring that all lessons are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the curriculum so that it provides suitable opportunities for pupils of all abilities in the mixed age classes to make progress in their learning.
- Ensure that the leadership and management adopt more rigorous approaches to the way that they monitor and evaluate the quality of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards achieved are inadequate and have not improved enough since the last inspection when this was identified as a significant weakness. All pupils are grouped into mixed age classes with Years 3 and 4 taught together; the same system operates in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' planning does not meet the needs of pupils in these classes and this is a key factor contributing to underachievement. Standards are exceptionally low by the end of Year 4. School data shows that about half the pupils made no progress at all in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 3. Recent improvements have led

more able pupils to reach higher levels in mathematics in Year 6, but standards remain below average in this subject throughout the school. Standards are lower in mathematics than in English and science. Girls reach higher standards than boys but all pupils significantly underachieve in all three subjects throughout the school. Pupils are underachieving because the expectations of what they can do are not high enough.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not making enough progress from Year 3 to Year 6 because the systems in place for identifying these pupils are inadequate. Currently too many pupils are categorised as having learning difficulties and this limits the amount of support they receive. The school does not have a secure system for identifying pupils with specific needs and those with lower attainment, and as a result, they are inappropriately all grouped together.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, with strengths in social development. The work of the school council is outstanding and makes a very good contribution to the school and wider communities. Members feel they make a positive contribution to improving the school, noting that the school puts 'power into children's hands'. They are particularly proud of their involvement in selecting the headteacher last year, and the new deputy headteacher who starts in the autumn term.

Pupils are not developing sufficient skills in literacy and numeracy to help them in the future. However, they know that they need to eat healthily and how to avoid potential hazards. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is satisfactory. A few find their lessons too easy. Behaviour is satisfactory overall but a number of pupils expressed concern about rough behaviour in the playground and that unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons sometimes hampers their learning. During the inspection, pupils behaved appropriately in and around the school at all times.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate. Too many lessons are characterised by low expectations and pupils work at activities that are not helping them to make adequate progress. This is because teachers do not make sufficient use of the information they gain from assessment and marking of pupils' work to plan future lessons. The pace of learning is too slow. In particular, many lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for the older and more able pupils in the mixed age classes throughout the school. However, there are pockets of good teaching that result in more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 making better progress in English and mathematics.

Some pupils from mixed ability groups who are falling behind are taught in small groups for short periods and this is helping them to make better progress. The work provided

for pupils with learning difficulties in lessons is often the same as for all other pupils and this limits the progress they make. Currently the school identifies most pupils who have lower attainment as having learning difficulties. This lack of accurate assessment hinders pupils' progress and reduces the amount of support that is available for those with particular needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate because it does not meet the needs of all pupils. The school judges its curriculum to be satisfactory. However, too often, it lacks challenge and does not capture pupils' interest. For example, a number of Year 6 pupils said that they found science lessons 'boring'. This is because the curriculum is not tailored well enough to help pupils make the next steps in their learning. Pupils of different abilities and ages often do much the same work. Setting pupils by ability for mathematics has not been successful in giving a better match of work to ability.

The curriculum enables pupils to understand how to be healthy and safe, and how to work and play together. Specialist teachers provide a satisfactory range of enrichment activities, including French. Pupils particularly enjoy the visits to places of educational interest such as Walsingham and the Imperial War Museum. They are enthusiastic about the after-school clubs, which include a good range of physical activities as well as music.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The care, guidance and support pupils receive to help them with their learning are inadequate because the targets they are set do not take account of their prior attainment. In addition, pupils do not know their targets well enough or how to improve their work. This hampers pupils' progress so that the standards they reach are too low. Pupils with learning difficulties receive satisfactory support when working in small groups in some lessons. The amount of support they receive throughout the day is limited because about a third of the pupils in the school are identified as having specific needs. As a result, pupils are slow to reach their individual targets.

Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are in place and the school provides a good level of pastoral guidance. They are confident they can tell someone about their concerns, either in person or through the 'bully box' system and that these concerns are dealt with effectively. Pupils are encouraged to be healthy and safe. For example, they are advised to bring in hats and sun-block during sunny weather.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate but improving under the leadership of the new headteacher. Since the last inspection in 2003, there have been several changes

in staffing and leadership at the school that have hampered its improvement. The checks that the school makes are not sufficiently rigorous or frequent. This limits school leaders' understanding of the effect of the changes they are making. As a result, the school does not make accurate evaluations of the quality of its work in all areas. There is insufficient capacity for improvement in the school.

A good computer system for checking pupils' progress has recently been introduced and provides a good foundation for improving the way the school checks the impact of changes that are made. At the moment, this system is not fully effective because the targets for learning are not based on pupils' prior attainment so they are too low. Checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning so that senior staff have some understanding of what needs to improve. However, senior staff and subject leaders are not making accurate assessments of the quality of teaching and learning and of pupils' work, and this limits the rate of improvement.

Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Key governors have undertaken nationally recognised qualifications in governance to improve their work. Governors check the school's work satisfactorily and fully support the headteacher in her drive to raise standards further. Parents are confidentially asked for their views of the school at each parents evening before they meet the staff to discuss their children's progress. The school council's views are highly regarded by school leaders. Parents recognise that the headteacher has made positive changes to the school since her recent appointment.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	No
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

Dear Children

Thank you for helping us during our visit to your school. We enjoyed talking to you and thought that most of you behaved politely. However, your school needs a lot of help to improve things so that you do better in your work.

The best thing about your school is the school council. Its members are really effective and particularly proud of the choice they made when the headteacher was appointed. You told us that 'We chose her and she is kind and understanding'. We agree with you. A lot of you said that you like coming to school. We were pleased with the way your teachers help you to be responsible, for example, they expect you to organise the Huff and Puff activities by yourselves.

Your teachers have been asked to take greater account of what you know already when they set your targets. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that lessons are designed carefully and you achieve your targets as quickly as possible. This means your work will be more interesting and challenging so that you reach higher standards in all subjects. Your school has been asked to check how well things are going more carefully, and especially to find out if the changes they are making are helping you to improve your work. You will be able to help your teachers by remembering your targets and telling your teachers when you think you have achieved them.

We have asked the school to improve the things that need to be better as quickly as possible. Your teachers will have help to make the improvements and more inspectors will be visiting you regularly to check on how well the school is making progress.

Yours sincerely

Liz Kounnou Lead inspector