

Fulmer Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110227
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	288604
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	52
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Barnes
Headteacher	Mrs M Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2003
School address	Aldbourn Lane Fulmer Slough SL3 6JB
Telephone number	01753 662654
Fax number	01753 662654

Age group	4–7
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Inspection number	288604

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

This oversubscribed school, in a commuter village close to the Berkshire border, is much smaller than schools generally. Pupils are admitted from a wide area and have a range of social and economic backgrounds. Most are of White British heritage. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is smaller than in most schools. The school has just achieved the Challenge Award for its provision for able, gifted or talented pupils. It also holds the Healthy Schools and Quality Mark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents, overwhelmingly, supported one family's view that this outstanding school provides pupils with 'the best possible start' that they could have. Many wished that their children could remain at Fulmer until they were 11. 'Attention to every detail is obvious' noted one parent while others praised their children's progress, the open door policy, the excellent communication and the constant improvement to the site and building, making it an environment fit for the twenty-first century. The school is most effective at dismantling barriers to learning. As a result of consistently effective teaching and classroom support, pupils thrive, developing into happy, well mannered and effective learners who make excellent progress. Results in national tests show that standards are consistently well above those found nationally. That personal development and well-being are at the heart of the school's philosophy is exemplified by the introduction of personalised learning logs for able, gifted and talented pupils. The school has appropriate plans to extend these to other groups in the new school year in order to increase the amount of individualised learning taking place.

Behaviour, during an exceptionally busy and involved art week, was exemplary. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education by virtue of developing excellent work habits and by the high standards that they achieve. They have many opportunities to accept responsibilities in the school community, for example, helping younger pupils to use the library. Their involvement in deciding which topics they want to pursue gives them an exceptionally central role in the development of the curriculum and ensures that they are enthusiastic participants in their learning. Pupils wholeheartedly agree with the parent who wrote, 'The children love coming to school and enjoy a wide variety of rich learning experiences.' Visits and visitors bring the wider world to Fulmer. Pupils have a very good grasp of the importance of tolerance. Diversity is respected and is celebrated in many subjects.

The school is central to the life of the village and is exceptionally well thought of. Pupils are fully involved in village activities such as the Christmas service and the annual fete. The financial and practical support that the school receives from the community is outstanding and is all the more remarkable as so many of the pupils live outside its borders. Governors are very well informed and make an outstanding contribution to the school's success in sustaining improvement. The headteacher, who, rightly, is held in great esteem by the whole school community, sets the highest standards and the staff and pupils respond in kind. Electronic tracking procedures help to pinpoint speedily the relative rates of progress made by the pupils enabling additional work and support to be directed even more effectively than in the past. Consequently, some of the judgements in the self evaluation form, made before the impact of the recent innovations could be evaluated, have been superseded and are too modest. Resources are exceptionally well used, to improve outcomes and to secure good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the planned developments to increase the amount of personalised learning for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Consistently high quality teaching and an imaginative and well designed curriculum meet the Foundation Stage children's needs well. Children make excellent progress in their learning and

in their personal development so that by the time they enter Year 1 standards in basic skills are higher than usual. Building effectively on this splendid start, Key Stage 1 pupils make rapid progress in developing exceptionally secure literacy, numeracy and computing skills. There are no significant variations between groups of pupils by ethnicity, ability or gender. Pupils generally achieve the challenging targets set for them and a significant proportion exceeds them. Consequently, in national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils have scored well above average in reading, writing and mathematics over the last 4 years. Displays of work show that pupils achieve successfully across all other areas of the curriculum. Speaking and listening skills are exceptionally well developed enabling pupils to communicate most effectively with adults and with each other. Year 2 pupils confidently discussed complex issues such as different lifestyles in contrasting countries while pupils in the reception class quizzed the inspector about what she was doing and offered their well considered opinions on a range of subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral and cultural development is outstanding. This has a significant impact on their learning and on the standards that they reach. Their confident approach to school is matched by their enthusiasm and perseverance in new situations. Behaviour in lessons and around the school during art week was exemplary. Seldom has a visit to the dining area been such a pleasant and civilised experience. Pupils' high level of motivation and keenness to do well means that lessons run smoothly.

From the time they join the school the pupils work alongside others harmoniously. They have an extremely strong sense of community and thrive in the supportive atmosphere which allows them real responsibility and expects them to adopt safe habits. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education by virtue of developing excellent work habits and by the high standards achieved. Pupils participate in decision-making through membership of the school council and, more importantly, through their involvement in deciding which topics to pursue each term. In assemblies and lessons, by visiting different places of worship and by working with a nearby international school they learn about the wider world and gain respect for those who have different views from themselves.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Well planned lessons make learning relevant, exciting and fun. This engages the pupils and helps them to remain focussed for substantial amounts of time. Classrooms are spacious and well appointed. The effective use of high quality resources, such as interactive white boards, promotes learning admirably. All adults provide excellent role models in their relationships with each other, in their speaking and writing and in their positive attitudes. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and make very good use of formal and informal assessments to plan their learning. Focussed marking tells pupils how well they are doing and adults give helpful and timely advice. Tracking pupils' progress has been enhanced greatly by the switch to an electronic programme enabling staff to target specific groups more swiftly and therefore more effectively. Parents are kept well informed about how their children are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

An imaginative curriculum provides multiple opportunities for all learners to progress and develop the self-confidence and skills required for their future economic well-being. Recent changes have made learning more relevant by using a thematic approach and, crucially, by involving the pupils in the decision about what will be taught. A robust overview of the skills to be developed ensures that pupils receive a broad, balanced diet and provides a framework into which teachers can weave topics that match classes' interests and needs. Pupils' enthusiastic and excellent recall of things learnt over this year and last is testament to the effectiveness of this venture. Assemblies and philosophy lessons encourage thinking about spiritual, social and moral issues and a strong emphasis on doing your best, teamwork and consideration for others reinforces this. Creativity and imagination are encouraged through music, art and drama; science provides many opportunities to reflect on the beauty and wonder of the natural world while geography and art successfully explore similarities and differences in world cultures. Pupils play energetically, but safely, in small groups and make good use of the climbing frame. Appropriate use is made of amenities such as the Village hall and opportunities to work with other small schools. Enrichment activities, such as coaching by the local football club, have a high take up and are much enjoyed. The school has developed the outside area well since the last inspection. Suitable plans to develop this further are at an advanced stage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A parent wrote, 'Fulmer school is run by a team of highly dedicated adults who ...above all show extreme care for all of the children in the school.' This sentiment, echoed by many parents, is supported by the school's high level of commitment to encouraging enjoyment and achievement, and in promoting learners' health and safety. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and regularly reviewed; risk assessments are carefully attended to. In this safe and supportive environment, pupils reach challenging targets and develop a strong sense of security and well-being. Improvements in marking and target setting enable pupils to see what they have to do to improve their work and many were eager to share that information with the inspector. Those at risk are identified early and effective arrangements put in place to support their learning. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils have an excellent experience of schooling.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

That leadership and management, including governance, are exemplary is attested to by the continuing successful performance of the school. The headteacher and staff successfully focus on raising standards and promoting personal development and well-being. Staff say the headteacher is 'brilliant and inspirational' and she has the highest regard for their teaching skills and curriculum management. The sharing of tasks along conventional subject divisions has been replaced by a team based approach to managing the curriculum that includes all adults employed in classes. This works effectively because of a high level of trust and professionalism. A common sense of purpose enables relatively new members of staff to take responsibility for developing exciting projects such as the Virtual Learning Resource and the pupils' learning

logs. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective monitoring. The school has an excellent track record in raising achievement and making substantial improvements to the learning environment. Vetting procedures for all adults who work with learners are robust. Very good links exist with parents and outside agencies supporting its work and promoting community cohesion. The impact is seen in the deservedly high reputation that it enjoys locally. Governors are hard working and insightful. Their strategic planning is based on penetrating analyses and a strong desire to ensure that all pupils have the best education possible. Capacity to improve is excellent as demonstrated by the progress that pupils make and the successful re-modelling of the building to make it fit for purpose.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Fulmer Infant School, Slough, SL3 6JB

Thank you for your help when I visited you during Art Week. I promised that I would write and tell you what I discovered.

I agree with you, your parents and your teachers that this is an excellent school where you learn a lot and are very happy. There were so many good things about your school that I can only mention the most important ones.

- Your teachers plan and teach exciting lessons that help you to get ready for junior school.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are very kind to each other.
- You are confident and feel safe.
- You are extremely sensible and responsible and help a lot around the school.
- You really like the new building and realise how lucky you are to have such lovely classrooms.
- You enjoy choosing the topics for the term and this helps you to remember what you have learnt.
- You learn a lot about other countries and you show great respect for the differences in the way people live.
- The villagers enjoy having your school in Fulmer and they help out in many ways. You enjoy taking part in village events.
- Your headteacher works very hard and she has been very successful in making sure that you all do as well as you can. She is helped in this by the staff and the governors.

I thought that the personal learning logs that some children had started were a very good idea and I agree with your teachers that they should let more of you try them out next year.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and I wish you all the best for your futures.

Catherine Munt
Her Majesty's Inspector