



Fakenham Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121005
Local Authority NORFOLK
Inspection number 291947
Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006
Reporting inspector Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Norwich Road
School category	Community		Fakenham
Age range of pupils	3–7		Norfolk NR21 8HN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01328864511
Number on roll (school)	268	Fax number	01328 856052
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Barbara Rumley
		Headteacher	Mr Douglas Dale
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 19–20 October 2006	Inspection number 291947
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving a small market town and surrounding rural areas. Children's attainments on entry to the school vary from year to year and are usually below those expected nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than usual in Years 1 and 2. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. The school has spacious and attractive grounds.

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 and improving school that is much appreciated by parents. Pupils achieve and behave well because there are strengths in teaching and in the personal development of pupils. Consequently, when pupils leave the school standards are broadly average in writing and mathematics and are above average in reading. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Positive developments since the previous inspection include improved teaching and learning, which are now good. Pupils enjoy good relationships with their teachers who plan well to meet their differing needs. On occasions, such as at the beginning and end of mornings, time is not always used as effectively as it could be. Opportunities to enhance pupils' learning, for example by giving them more time to finish their writing, are missed.

Leadership is good at all levels and provides a strong foundation for the school's continuing improvement. The headteacher provides strong leadership. He is ably supported by the governors, staff and in particular by the deputy headteacher. This is a school with good capacity for further improvement because everyone is pulling in the same direction. Teachers, governors, teaching assistants and parent helpers all make a valuable contribution to the team effort to help pupils learn effectively and with enjoyment. Because information is shared openly and all staff are committed to continuing improvement, standards of work and achievement are gradually rising. A specific outcome of good leadership has been to address weaknesses in the teaching of writing that caused some pupils, especially boys, to underachieve. The school is rightly continuing its drive to raise standards in writing. In 2006, whilst not achieving as well as girls, boys' results moved closer to the national average.

The school keeps parents very well informed and makes exceptionally good use of its links with external professionals and organisations, which benefit pupils considerably. There are good systems in place for monitoring the school's effectiveness. School self-evaluation is accurate but lesson observations are not always sufficiently focused on the school's priorities for improving pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development and behaviour are good. They enjoy school and state confidently that they feel safe, 'because if we didn't, we could not learn'. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with potentially challenging behaviour, are supported well and with considerable expertise by the special educational needs coordinator. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a strong emphasis upon pupils adopting a healthy life style. Various cultural events and several after-school clubs successfully enliven the stimulating curriculum. The school is an attractive learning environment and much of pupils' work is celebrated in displays, although their writing is under represented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson observations focus on the school's priorities for developing pupils' learning.

- Improve standards in writing by adopting a more purposeful approach to the use of time at the beginning and end of morning and afternoon sessions.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

During their time in the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress. When they join Year 1 their standards of work are close to those expected for their age. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Results from the most recent tests show that pupils exceeded the national average in reading, whilst standards in writing and mathematics were broadly average. There has been a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below average. The school sets realistic but challenging targets for attainment. These indicate that the improvements in standards and progress are likely to be maintained by the current Year 2 pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and happy, hence they make good progress. They enjoy learning and behave well. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is working hard to make it better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. 'Thinking Time' is a special time of day for everyone, which during the week of the inspection explored the theme, 'Doing your Best'. Pupils and adults enjoy each others' company and are able to share feelings openly. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and to give to the community, for example, through the 'One World Celebration'. Pupils' good moral development was evident in a discussion held with the school council about pupils not owning up when they had done something wrong. Pupils commented, 'But they'd be breaking the Golden Rule about honesty!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school teachers and teaching assistants are good at celebrating pupils' efforts and successes. This helps pupils to become increasingly confident and communicative learners and to make good progress. Good use of accurate assessments of pupils' progress means that most lessons effectively meet the needs of the full range of abilities in each class. Even so, the school recognises that sometimes the work provided is not hard enough for the most able pupils, and is working to remedy this. Opportunities for the oldest pupils to apply their literacy skills through their writing are satisfactory. Pupils say they do not always have enough time to finish their writing. Time is not always used as constructively as possible, for example, at the beginning

and end of the morning to allow pupils to complete their work. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to share how well they feel they are getting on, which helps them to understand how to improve. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to all pupils' learning, but especially for pupils with additional needs, who make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 meets their needs well. Teachers give close attention to each subject and term by term lessons build on pupils' previous learning effectively, resulting in pupils' good progress and improved standards of work. Teachers skilfully ensure that pupils understand how their learning in one subject helps them to make progress in others. For example, when pupils study the topic of 'sound' in science they write about it. Good examples of pupils' writing in different subjects are not displayed often enough.

The school's grounds are used well to enhance pupils' learning and the use of the outdoor space for Nursery and Reception children is exceptionally good. Teachers provide a very good range of activities to enhance pupils' learning outside lessons. Pupils take great pride in the work they undertake in the gardening club and recognise that their participation in the various sports clubs helps them to keep fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good procedures for ensuring the school is a safe and secure place. Pupils told inspectors that they learn well because they feel safe. They show great care for each other and adults encourage and support them to do this. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well cared for. Teaching and other support assistants are deployed sensibly and contribute significantly to the progress pupils make, including the most vulnerable. The school's arrangements to track pupils' progress over time are very thorough and effective. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about how they can improve their work and tell each other how well they think they have done. This encourages them to take responsibility for themselves and provides a firm foundation for working in their next schools.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, very ably supported by his deputy, provides a strong steer for the school's continuing improvement. They are well supported by colleagues with additional responsibilities. All are striving to raise pupils' standards and achievement further. There is a thorough analysis of pupils' progress, although lesson observations do not routinely focus on the priorities identified in the school development plan to improve pupils' learning.

The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies. These links generate a strong sense of common purpose and contribute to the school knowing itself well. For example, the priorities for developing the work of higher attaining pupils and boys' writing are well planned and work has begun on them.

Pupils and parents appreciate the support they receive from the headteacher and staff. The governors are an asset to the school. They are thoughtful and analytical with a good grasp of the school's strengths, priorities for development and how to make progress. They have high expectations of themselves and the school. Governors make good use of information to plan for continued school improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

23 October 2006

Dear Children

Fakenham Infant and Nursery School, Norwich Road, Fakenham, Norfolk. NR21 8HN

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school just before half term. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing you tell us all about everything that you like about school. We understand why you like it so much. We agree with you and your families that you go to a good school.

We noticed how polite and enthusiastic you are. We think that you behave well, listen carefully to your teachers and take good care of each other. You told us that you feel safe in school and that this helps you learn. We think that this shows how sensible and thoughtful you are. You said that sometimes you run out of time to finish your writing and we have asked your teachers to think about how to make sure this doesn't happen.

You are working hard and doing well. All the adults in the school want you to do well and are always looking for ways to help you. We have asked Mr Dale to make sure that when he visits your lessons he always helps teachers to do the things that have been agreed, to help you do even better.

Thank you again for being so welcoming and such fun.

Jill Bavin

(Lead inspector)