

Finedon Infant School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	121869
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	292246
Inspection date	20 February 2007
Reporting inspector	Tricia Pritchard 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	115
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Wrigley
Headteacher	Vivienne Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Orchard Road Finedon Wellingborough NN9 5JG
Telephone number	01933 680467
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Age group	4-7
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Finedon Infant School is a school with a falling roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the proportion of pupils with additional learning needs is well above the national average. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils with English as an additional language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Finedon Infant School is a good school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the education their children receive. Pupils start school with weak skills in literacy, particularly writing, but good skills in mathematics. As a result of the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage, they make very good progress in relation to their starting points. In Key Stage 1, they are well taught and make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain high standards in these subjects in comparison with pupils in other schools nationally. All pupils, and particularly boys, do less well in writing, but results are still broadly in line with the national average.

The school has recently introduced a topic-based approach to learning. This creative approach to curricular planning is in its infancy but it is already bringing positive benefits, especially in increasing pupils' motivation to write and in developing their investigative skills. However, teachers occasionally use worksheets which lack challenge rather than encouraging pupils to write freely and independently.

The pupils' personal development and well-being is good and relationships between adults and pupils are very good throughout the school. Those with additional learning needs or behavioural difficulties are supported very effectively. The school is staffed with teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to teaching and learning and to the well-being of staff and pupils. Pupils learn in a well-ordered and stimulating environment.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is ably supported by staff and governors. Managing change is a key strength. The school does not 'stand still'. Changes to the curriculum and improvements to the premises have been well planned and staged. Most issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully, although the presentation of pupils' work still needs improvement. Self-evaluation is effective and embedded firmly into the ethos of the school. Consequently, the school is well placed to face future challenges and to continue to improve. It offers good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to write independently.
- Ensure that pupils present their work well.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with good mathematical skills but with weak literacy skills. During their time in the Foundation Stage, they make very good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception Year, their communication, mathematical calculation and social skills are particularly well developed.

Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Between 2003 and 2005, Year 2 pupils attained scores for reading, mathematics and writing which were significantly above the national average. In 2006, standards dipped slightly because pupils did less well in writing. Despite this lapse, overall standards remained above the national average.

All groups of pupils do better in mathematics than in English. The proportion of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics and reading is high in comparison with other schools nationally. Boys do considerably better than girls in reading and in mathematics but girls do slightly better in writing than boys. There is a large difference in boys' scores for reading and writing.

Pupils with additional learning needs make good progress. All pupils are set challenging targets which are informed by regular and accurate assessment; most pupils meet their reading and mathematics targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' social, cultural and spiritual development is good and their moral development is satisfactory. They enjoy contributing to the local and wider community by, for example, participating in local festivals and sponsoring a child in Africa. They are developing an increasing awareness of the multicultural dimension of living through engaging in discussion with visiting speakers from a range of cultural backgrounds. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school and are keen to learn. However, there are a few pupils who present challenging behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory. There has been a concerted and successful effort to reduce unauthorised absence.

Pupils are aware of the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular exercise. They speak enthusiastically about the after-school clubs, and the majority attend at least one extra-curricular activity. They are very good at recycling and show a growing understanding of environmental issues. Those who belong to the 'playground squad' are very conscientious in carrying out their duties. They enjoy taking responsibility and are good at ensuring that no-one feels lonely in the playground. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and in the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in the Foundation Stage. Teachers are very enthusiastic about teaching the curriculum through themes and topics, and this is evident in the delivery of their lessons. Pupils enjoy the selection of topics. At the time of the inspection, the topic for Years 1 and 2 was plants and animals and in the Foundation Stage, it was traditional tales.

Teachers know the pupils well and they track pupils' progress carefully. Marking is constructive. However, teachers do not always make full use of their assessments to plan tasks which meet the needs of all pupils during group work. In Years 1 and 2, teachers sometimes present pupils with worksheets which lack challenge and this also hinders the presentation of their work. In the Foundation Stage, the children's 'special books', which are their personal profiles, are exemplary. They are exceptionally well annotated by the teachers and are precious records of the children's development as independent learners. Teaching assistants are well deployed in all classes. Parents are supportive of their children's learning and teachers are conscientious in setting suitable homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has recently adopted a new approach to curriculum planning which is bringing many benefits. For example, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills through problem solving, particularly in mathematics and science. The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills through focused discussion is also successful. Key skills in literacy have been mapped carefully within each topic so that pupils have opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences. However, there is scope for providing all pupils with more opportunities to engage in sustained independent writing so that they gain a good understanding of how to improve its quality. The daily teaching of phonics as a separate activity throughout the school is a good move and is accelerating the progress made by pupils who have previously been reluctant readers and writers.

The teaching and learning environment for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The indoor and outdoor areas have been very well designed to meet the needs of the youngest pupils. Children in the Reception Year have access to a very well planned activity-based curriculum. Full use is made of the indoor and outdoor facilities.

The curriculum is enriched through outside visits and visiting speakers. There is an extensive range of after-school clubs, including Young Builders, Make and Bake and drama.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well supported pastorally and academically. Those who exhibit challenging behaviour are helped to overcome their problems. The school adopts a consistent and positive approach to managing behaviour. Pupils with additional learning needs are also very well supported. The school is well staffed with teaching assistants who play a major role in supporting pupils' individual needs. Child protection procedures are followed consistently. The school cooperates well with external agencies to support pupils with specific learning or emotional difficulties.

Induction and transition arrangements, when pupils move classes, are very well managed. The Apple Tree Club, which provides before- and after-school care, and also operates in the holidays, is well regarded in the community. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure that pupils are safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides clear direction and is well supported by staff and governors. There is a good team spirit amongst staff, pupils, parents and governors. Since the last inspection, subject leaders have been enabled to take an active role in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning. The school is successful in meeting its aim to be an inclusive school where all pupils are welcomed and encouraged to succeed. The provision for pupils with additional learning difficulties or disabilities is very well coordinated. The Foundation Stage is very well led.

In recent years, there have been considerable improvements to the buildings and the outdoor learning environment and to the provision of information and communication technology (ICT)

resources. Space is very well used. The school is a bright, colourful and welcoming place in which to live and learn. The grounds and play areas have been designed most imaginatively. Staff development is focused effectively on meeting the individual professional development needs of staff and on supporting school priorities for development.

The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to continuous improvement. They are open and honest about the school's strengths and areas for development and this is evident in the self-evaluation document. The school development plan draws effectively upon the outcomes of self-evaluation. It is focused clearly on raising standards in writing, promoting the well-being of all pupils and planning for a reduction in the number of classes next year. All these are pertinent priorities. With the exception of the presentation of pupils' work, the issues from the last inspection report have been successfully tackled. The leadership team demonstrates good capacity to sustain improvement.

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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
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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?	2
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	2
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	3
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.

Annex A

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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school when I visited recently. I enjoyed meeting you all and talking to you. Your school is a very welcoming place. It is colourful and tidy and you look after it well. The grounds and play areas are so well designed and provide an exciting and interesting place for playing and learning.

Congratulations on working hard and making such good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. The daily phonics lessons are helping you with your reading and writing. Your teachers plan interesting lessons and are very excited about the new topic approach to the curriculum. It was good to see those of you in the purple, green and blue classes enjoying learning about plants and animals, and those of you in the red and yellow classes enjoying learning about traditional tales. Your teachers are keen to help you improve your writing so that you do as well in writing as you do in reading. I have, therefore, suggested that they give you more opportunities to write on your own. I looked at your work and noticed that some of the worksheets you are given are too easy. I discussed this with the staff and we also discussed ways of improving further the presentation of your work.

You are very well looked after by all the adults in the school and you look after each other well too. I enjoyed meeting the playground squad and want to say 'Well done!' for having such good ideas and ensuring that everyone is happy in the playground.

Your school is well led and managed. Mrs Murphy, the staff and governors are good at planning ahead. They want you to do well and they want you to live and learn in a caring and stimulating environment. I think they are successful at doing this.

Good luck for the future.