



# Place Farm Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124554  
**Local Authority** SUFFOLK  
**Inspection number** 293029  
**Inspection dates** 8–9 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** John Messer

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	First	<b>School address</b>	Camps Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Haverhill
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9		Suffolk CB9 8HF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01440 702836
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	273	<b>Fax number</b>	01440 712802
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Webster
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Golding
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 June 2001		

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<b>Age group</b> 4–9	<b>Inspection dates</b> 8–9 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 293029
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This first school is larger than most primary schools. A significant proportion of pupils come from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies widely but currently is below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and several speak 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: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Within this, there are significant strengths. The school has worked hard on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. In these respects it has achieved a great deal of success. Behaviour is very good and pupils are eager to learn. Pupils' personal development is good. They are confident and self-possessed. This contributes well to the sound foundations that are laid for their future learning and working lives. The school provides a rich curriculum where physical education and the performing arts feature strongly. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and stay safe. The school council supports pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to the community well and has led a successful drive to improve recycling and save energy. The building is inviting and well equipped.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly and relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Pupils have learning targets but these are not sufficiently precise. The highly skilled classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in Reception and many are on course to attain most of the early learning goals. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and mostly satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. By Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are slightly above average. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 do not always expect enough of pupils, especially in mathematics. Several long-term staff absences in Years 3 and 4 have interrupted pupils' learning and have contributed to slower progress in some classes, especially in mathematics. In Year 4 standards are well below average in mathematics, slightly below average in reading and average in writing.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the issues raised in the last inspection have been successfully resolved. Subject leaders create action plans designed to raise standards but these do not always include precise, measurable targets against which to evaluate new initiatives. The school does not measure the progress that pupils make frequently enough or in sufficient depth. As a result it does not identify precisely where pupils are making insufficient progress and where urgent support is needed to improve achievement. Governors know the school well and provide sound support. Pupils enjoy school and the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with their children's education.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that those in leadership positions rigorously monitor pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy so that they can quickly identify where improvements are needed.
- Set challenging targets for pupils and teachers to aim at in literacy and numeracy and frequently review progress towards them.
- Include clear, measurable targets in the school improvement plan.
- Raise teachers' expectations of the progress that pupils make in Years 3 and 4, especially in mathematics.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Those who have learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make good progress. Children settle happily in the Reception classes. There is a strong emphasis on developing communication, language and literacy. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good. The results of national assessments in Year 2 in 2006 confirmed that standards were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's analysis of the progress that pupils made from Year 2 in 2004 to Year 4 in 2006 shows that pupils did not make enough progress in mathematics. Progress was satisfactory in writing but less than might be expected in reading. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes in Year 3 and in Year 4 have contributed to uneven progress. Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils in literacy and numeracy. This is partly because expectations of the amount of progress that pupils should make in each class have not been clearly established. In addition, long-term staff absences have interrupted pupils' learning in Years 3 and 4.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Social skills are well developed. Pupils are keen to protect the environment and the 'ECO' group has ensured that recycling takes place throughout the school. Pupils contribute well to the local community and support many fundraising activities. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attitudes. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and helpful. Pupils say that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand the need for a balanced diet and make wise choices from the healthy lunches. The drugs education week helps pupils to understand the dangers of smoking and drug abuse.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. They are good in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are planned thoroughly and run smoothly. Effective use is made of the new interactive whiteboards. Teachers' planning takes account of the different abilities of pupils in the class, but is not always sufficiently challenging, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Consequently, not all pupils make as much progress as they should. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, so they enjoy learning and make good progress

towards their individual goals. Marking is frequent and the best shows pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers' records enable them to identify pupils' National Curriculum attainment levels in mathematics and English, but have only recently been improved to enable them to see whether each pupil is making enough progress each year.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides an interesting curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs and helps them to enjoy learning. Personal, social and health education is well planned and pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and be healthy. They enjoy using computers on a regular basis across a broad range of subjects. Older pupils are keen on learning French. A very good range of visits and visitors adds interest to learning. The swimming pool makes a strong contribution to pupils' fitness during the summer term and nearly all pupils learn to swim. A good range of clubs enriches learning and supports social development well. Pupils enjoy competitive sports and are proud of their successes.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school has a relaxed and happy climate for learning. Pupils feel safe and secure. Good relationships with staff encourage them to discuss concerns freely. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support. Newcomers settle quickly and happily. Good systems are in place to monitor absence and improve attendance. Procedures for child protection are clear and understood by all staff. Health and safety checks are rigorous. Teachers give pupils good guidance on what they should do to improve their work. Parents are pleased with the care, guidance and support their children receive.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has focused strongly on improving behaviour and the quality of care. Initiatives have been successful and resulted in a good climate for learning. The school has begun to pay closer attention to measuring pupils' progress, so that it can identify precisely where improvements are needed in order to raise standards. A clear system is being introduced that sets annual targets for each pupil. The scheme is in its infancy and it is too early to judge its success in raising standards. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve. Subject leaders have a strong commitment to raising standards. Last year writing was identified as a weakness and the English subject leader led a successful campaign to raise standards. Subject leaders contribute action plans to the school improvement plan but these do not always include details of how improvements in standards will be measured. The school's self-evaluation is detailed but does not focus strongly enough on the need to monitor and improve achievement. It has correctly

identified mathematics in Years 3 and 4 as an area of weakness. The school's judgements on its overall effectiveness, achievement and leadership are rather overstated because it has not fully recognised the need for leaders at all levels to focus more rigorously on raising standards and ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress each year.

The business manager manages finances and the professional development of support staff exceptionally well. Finances are managed well and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The lunchtime supervisors ensure that lunchtimes run smoothly and that pupils are in the right frame of mind in the afternoon sessions. Governors work hard on behalf of the school and support it wholeheartedly. Parents support the school well and take an active part in their children's learning.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

10 November 2006

Dear Children

Place Farm Primary School, Camps Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, CB9 8HF

We enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for being so helpful and for telling us all about the school.

There are some particularly good things about the school. It is a welcoming place. The corridors and classrooms are bright and colourful with interesting displays of your work. The staff are friendly and you get on well with your teachers. A good atmosphere for learning has been created. You are very well behaved. You talk sensibly about your work and you are keen to learn more about the world. We liked your self-confidence and cheerfulness. You like taking on responsibility for helping around the school. The school council has led a successful drive to save energy and raise awareness about recycling. They are now planning to create a quiet area in the playground. Staff are keen to help you and they work hard to make sure that you are safe and happy. The new interactive whiteboards are great and are helping you with your learning. You know how to stay safe and keep healthy. You told us that you enjoy school and are proud to be members of the school community. You are good at swimming and other sports. The videos of the 'Stage Club' school productions, 'Grease' and 'Oliver', look amazing. So much wonderful talent!

We think that there are several things that the school should do to help you to reach higher standards in your work. We think that staff should measure your progress more often to make sure that everybody is doing as well as they can and that nobody is slipping behind. We also think that everybody needs to be clear about how much progress you are expected to make in literacy and numeracy. We think that those in Years 3 and 4 could be encouraged to reach higher standards, especially in mathematics.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Messer

Lead inspector