

# Fen Drayton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110606
<b>Local Authority</b>	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310357
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Nelson

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	60
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steven Gatley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Connors
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2005
<b>School address</b>	Cootes Lane Fen Drayton Cambridge CB4 5SL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01954 273346
<b>Fax number</b>	01954 273345

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small village primary school serving a rural area. The proportion of children eligible for a free school meal is around average. Most children are from White British families with a very small number from Other White or Asian Indian backgrounds. A below-average proportion needs extra help with learning but this varies from year to year. The proportion with a statement of their special educational need is above average. When children start school their skills and knowledge are in line with those expected of their age but within a wide range. The school is undergoing substantial improvements to the accommodation, including the provision of a school hall. The headteacher has been in place for half a term.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Children and their parents have overwhelmingly positive views of the school and rightly recognise it as a good school. Standards are above average at Year 2 and Year 6; in some years they are exceptionally high at Year 2. Children's achievement is good throughout the school as a result of good teaching and learning activities that children enjoy. Achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 2 has been particularly good in two of the last three years but achievement in English has been closer to satisfactory. The school has identified that children do much better in mathematics than they do in writing in Years 3 to 6. Although staff have tried various strategies to improve children's writing over the last five years these have not ensured that it matches achievement in mathematics. The school has now introduced more rigorous systems for checking writing to help pinpoint the reasons for the disparity.

Children's personal development is good. Their behaviour is exemplary so that no time is lost in lessons in maintaining discipline, and playtimes are happy and harmonious occasions. Children say there is no bullying and they enjoy making their views about the school known through their school council. Care, guidance and support are good with excellent pastoral care as a result of staff knowing individuals exceptionally well. One parent summed up the views of others in praising the school's 'culture of friendliness and inclusion'. Recent enhancements to the way staff check children's progress have been introduced to improve the accuracy and rigour of assessment. The school is excellent at identifying children who find learning hard and providing the support they need so that their achievement and rate of progress are exceptionally good.

Several parents commented very positively about the new headteacher and the good start he has made at the school. He has quickly identified the school's strengths and areas for development and begun to put initiatives in place to improve it further. He receives excellent support from governors, who are very supportive and confident enough to ask challenging questions about the school's performance. Overall leadership and management are good, with subject leaders making a significant contribution to the success of the school. One parent summed up the school's present position by saying, 'this feels like a school that is developing and improving in many respects'. The improvements in the accommodation, the maintenance of high standards at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics at Key Stage 2, the dedication of the staff, and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation show that it is well placed to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and all meet the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1 with some exceeding these. This is because there is an excellent ratio of experienced and talented adults to teach them and provide a stimulating learning environment. This ensures that they settle quickly into school life, and the strong focus on their personal, social and emotional development helps them to become increasingly independent and self-sufficient. For example, children confidently choose activities and show on the board which they have opted for and sustain concentration on those activities.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Establish what children find difficult with writing in Years 3 to 6 and ensure that the strategies to improve it are raising standards and accelerating achievement to bring them more in line with those in mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress throughout the school from Reception to Year 6. This results in above-average standards by Year 2 and Year 6. In some years, standards at Year 2 are exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. At Year 6, achievement in writing has lagged behind that in mathematics despite various strategies to improve things. While standards in mathematics have been exceptionally high by Year 6 for three of the last five years, standards in English have been closer to average, with children doing better in reading than in writing. Staff have set very challenging targets for Year 6 in 2008 in English and mathematics. Children who need extra help with their learning benefit enormously from the excellent adult-to-child ratio in school and make exceptionally good progress. Their good achievement means that children are well prepared for the next stage of their schooling and adult life. Children produce some good quality art work, like the portraits in the style of Picasso and Warhol.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Children thoroughly enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Although attendance over the last full school year was average, the figures for the first half term of this school year show a marked improvement. Children speak knowledgeably of what they need for a healthy lifestyle and enjoy nutritious snacks and lunches at school. They enjoy the opportunity to take part in physical education and in sporting activities after school. They say that there is no bullying, and observations during the inspection noted excellent behaviour and relationships. Children play and work with clear consideration for the needs of others so that playtime incidents are rare even when they enjoy vigorous physical activities. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council, including ideas for improving the playground equipment. They sometimes lack confidence to express their views in an open forum and the school is addressing this through a strong focus on developing speaking skills. Children enjoy taking responsibility for aspects of school life, like supervising the distribution of snack pots at break time. They have good opportunities to reflect on issues of importance and to learn about a range of cultures from around the world.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Children say their lessons are interesting and they get plenty of help when they are stuck. The excellent relationships that teachers forge with their classes help to encourage the children to ask questions when they do not understand, so that they learn as effectively as possible. Learning is enhanced because teachers work very well with support staff to ensure that they capitalise on the excellent ratio of adults to children. This means that children of different abilities get the support they need to help them to do well. Systems for checking children's

progress in mathematics have been more rigorous and accurate than those for checking writing. This has contributed to the good progress children make in mathematics. The school has introduced new procedures to check more rigorously how well children are doing in writing.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good range of activities to help children learn. In the Foundation Stage, this includes an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-chosen activities. The staff have identified a range of ways of improving this provision even further through a discussion paper on '100 tasks'. Children say they enjoy the trips linked to their work and the clubs and sporting activities they take part in after school. These help to enhance their enjoyment of school. A strong focus on healthy living through science and physical education ensures children's excellent understanding and acceptance of what they need for a healthy lifestyle. Staff have recognised that some children do not enjoy writing and that there is room for learning to be more creative and practical. They are putting plans in place to address these issues though they have not yet been in place long enough to have raised standards.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school places a strong emphasis on the care and welfare of children and ensures that all the procedures required to guard their health and safety are in place. Consequently, children feel safe and well looked after in school. They say there is always someone to go to if they have a concern. The staff are developing increasingly sophisticated systems for checking how well children are doing in English, mathematics and science and for monitoring their progress in these subjects. Systems for identifying and supporting children who find learning hard are very effective. While teachers set children targets they miss opportunities to get them to evaluate how well they think they are learning and to set their own targets for improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence of staff and built on their clear commitment and enthusiasm to take the school to a higher level. He receives excellent support from the governors, who have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have worked hard to bring the school to its current successful position. The headteacher has recognised that strategies to improve writing over recent years have not had the desired impact on standards and achievement. He has introduced more rigorous systems for checking how well children are doing and set very challenging targets for improvement. Governors and staff have managed the recent period of transition effectively, including the demands of inducting a new headteacher and overseeing substantial building works. The school's improvements over recent years put it in a good position to get even better.

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## Annex A

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	1

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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**

3 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Fen Drayton Primary School, Fen Drayton, CB4 5SL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed talking with several of you and watching you at work and play.

You told me that Fen Drayton is a good school and I agree with you. You work hard and as a result do very well, particularly in mathematics. Although you also do well in English by Year 6, your writing lets you down a little. I have asked the teachers to look at what you find hard in writing and to help you to get better at it so that your English results match those in mathematics.

Your behaviour is excellent and you older ones really enjoy helping out around school. You know about healthy eating and exercise and enjoy your physical education and after school clubs. You say there is no bullying and that one of the best things about the school is its friendliness.

Your teachers work very hard to look after you and to help you to learn, and you said how much you enjoy the lessons they plan for you. As a result, you work hard and no time is wasted in getting you to listen and concentrate on your work. All your teachers have plenty of ideas for making the school even better and you can play your part by continuing to work hard in class and behave as excellently as you do.

I wish you well for the future.

Ian Nelson

Lead inspector