

Fulstow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120447
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313619
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Lewis
Headteacher	Mr J S Grant
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Churchthorpe Fulstow Louth Lincolnshire LN11 0XL
Telephone number	01507 363226
Fax number	01507 363226

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This village primary school is much smaller than average. Nearly all pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. No pupils are eligible for free school meals. The attainment of most, but not all, pupils on entry to the school is average. In some year groups a large proportion of pupils enter or leave the school part way through this phase of their education. The school has received the Active Mark award.

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 school. Children enter the school with standards that are broadly average, and by Year 6 most attain standards that are above average. This represents good progress. Teaching is good, so pupils learn effectively and achieve well. Classes are small and this helps teachers and support staff to develop a detailed understanding of each individual's learning needs. However, teachers do not always insist that pupils present their work neatly. Lack of care over presentation diminishes the quality of work. One key factor that has accelerated progress is the good system that the new headteacher has introduced to set ambitious targets for pupils to aim for in literacy and numeracy. Pupils respond well to the challenges set and have a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning. Pupils who experience difficulties with learning, as well as the faster learners, are supported well and make good progress.

Pupils' personal development, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is a particular strength of the school. They develop into confident learners. They are self-assured and display a maturity beyond their years. They willingly take on responsibilities such as play leaders, and older pupils are good at supporting the younger ones. They all enjoy school. One said, 'It's like one big happy family.' Pupils develop a wide range of key skills that provide them with a good foundation for transferring to the next phase of their education. The school maintains high levels of care. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Pupils understand what makes a balanced diet and appreciate the need for regular exercise. The morning and afternoon 'activate' sessions, led by the older pupils, gets everybody ready for learning. Pupils receive good guidance on how to stay safe and look after themselves. They support a number of charities such as the local air ambulance service, which helps them to recognise their responsibilities towards the wider community.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads the school well. He has fostered a strong sense of teamwork so that all staff share a commitment to improving provision and raising attainment. Most parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'The enthusiasm of the staff is helping the school to go from strength to strength.' Some parents are concerned about shortcomings in communication between home and school. The school is working hard to forge stronger links with parents. Informative newsletters are now produced and the school is becoming increasingly involved in community events.

Good links have been made with two other small village schools so that expertise can be shared. The governing body provides sound support. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in monitoring the school's performance. Resources are good and the learning environment is improving, especially for children in the Foundation Stage. Classrooms and corridors are bright and colourful. The grounds have been developed well as a learning resource. The curriculum is satisfactory but does not fully capture pupils' interests and promote work of consistently high quality. The school has begun to make the curriculum more stimulating and exciting by developing imaginative role play and by linking subjects to create a topic approach to learning. This is one of the main priorities for further development. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and used well to create a good school development plan. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school is poised to make further advances and has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are given a warm welcome when they start school and settle happily in Class 1. The four Reception-age children enjoy their learning. The Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership and clear direction. There is a strong emphasis on teaching children the relationship between letters and the sounds they make. This gives them the tools to develop early reading and writing skills. There is also an emphasis on teaching children about numbers, shapes and patterns so that their mathematical development is secure. They love listening to stories and are keen to learn to read for themselves. The outdoor learning environment is being developed and new, extra resources are already enhancing children's learning. The overall quality of provision is good so that children learn effectively and make good progress. The school's assessments show that most pupils attain standards that are slightly above national expectations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum to include more opportunities for imaginative role play and exciting topics that match pupils' interests.
- Teach pupils how to present their work neatly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those who find learning difficult and those who learn quickly, achieve well. This is largely because teachers prepare lessons carefully and set challenging tasks that are well matched to each individual's particular learning needs. Pupils make good progress between Years 1 and 6. By Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By Year 6, they are above average in English, mathematics and science. The number of pupils in each year group is very small, so comparative statistical data must be treated with great caution. However, the school's results in national tests in Year 6 are usually above average. They declined to below average in 2007 because, although most of the group made good progress, the starting points of several were lower than usual. The school's assessment data indicate that results are likely to improve significantly this year and will be much higher than last. Pupils are developing a good range of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and most learn to swim well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a strength of the school. The school's very small size and the caring staff help pupils to feel secure. They are confident and become self-assured learners. Pupils are keen to learn and eager to please. Attendance is good. The warm and friendly relationships, coupled with the business-like approaches to learning, help to foster high levels of maturity and responsibility. Behaviour is nearly always good and pupils confirm that, 'There is definitely no bullying at all.' They have a keen sense of fairness and know what is right. They are particularly keen to support the 'Life Straws' initiative which helps people in developing countries, such as The Gambia where the school has links, to drink purified water. Pupils are polite and sensitive to the needs of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The ratio of adults per pupil is high and so each receives good support. Pupils are well motivated. One boy expressed this clearly, 'They come up with interesting ways of teaching, like literacy based on Harry Potter and maths based on Star Wars.' Teachers assess pupils' achievement thoroughly and keep careful records of progress. These are used well to provide all groups with appropriate challenges that lead them on to the next stages in their learning. The faster learners are given their heads and learn rapidly whilst the slower learners receive appropriate support to help them achieve success. Pupils are not always shown how to present their work, including the films they make, with enough attention to detail to enhance the quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Sport, drama, music, art and design feature well. The school compensates for the lack of a school hall by using facilities in other local schools. The school has made a good start on planning a curriculum that links subjects together to form interesting topics. It has embarked on enlivening lessons by placing more emphasis on drama and film-making. However, a lack of direction and attention to detail diminishes the quality of the work produced. There is a good range of visits to places of interest to extend learning opportunities. Regular visits to the village hall to eat lunch with senior citizens promote pupils' social development well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and support are strong features of the school and underpin learning well. Pupils do not always receive enough guidance about how to present their work neatly. Good emphasis is placed on ensuring the safety of pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and are understood by staff. Pupils say they feel secure in the school. They receive clear guidance about how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. They say that they understand what they have to do to reach the next steps in their learning. They feel well supported by all school staff and would have no hesitation about sharing problems or concerns with their teachers. Parents are very pleased with these high levels of care.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher gives clear direction and leadership. Staff willingly participate in new developments to improve teaching in order to make learning even more effective. One key factor that is helping to raise standards is the introduction of clear targets for the amount of progress that each pupil is expected to make. Pupils' work is frequently assessed to check on whether as much progress as possible is being made. Clear charts are created to plot progress and identify any pupils who are not doing as well as expected. Extra support is then provided where appropriate. Although this system is new, it is already proving effective. The governing body gives sound support but has not monitored provision systematically or fully explored what

needs doing to raise standards further. Finances are managed prudently. The school is an orderly community and good management ensures that it runs smoothly on a day to day basis.

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

28 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Fulstow Primary School, Fulstow, Lincolnshire, LN11 0XL

I thoroughly enjoyed the day I spent with you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

I think that there are many good things about your school. The older pupils are very good at helping the youngest ones and that helps to make the school seem very much like one big happy family. Your behaviour is good and you like learning new things. You work willingly but also enjoy having fun. You care about other people, especially those who are less fortunate than you are. I think that the 'Life Straws' that help people to drink purified water is a great idea and it's good that you are keen to support getting more of these straws to the people who need them. You are good at reading, writing, mathematics and science. The grounds are being developed well and the swimming pool is used a lot so that everybody learns to swim. You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves and others. You told me that one of the best things about the school was the teachers and I agree. All the grown ups do their best to help each and every one of you to feel happy and to learn successfully. Mr Grant and all the staff are keen to make the school even better and to make your lessons even more exciting. The links that you are making with other village schools are really good. Not only does it help you to make a wider circle of friends but it also gives you more opportunities to learn alongside others.

I think that there are two things that would make the school even better. I think that your topic work could be developed further so that you have more frequent opportunities to study exciting things in greater depth. I also think that you could improve the quality of the work that you produce, including the films that you make, by paying much closer attention to detail and the way the work is presented.

I wish you every success in the future.

John Messer Lead inspector