

Foulsham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120807
Local Authority	NORFOLK LA
Inspection number	313747
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Hambrook
Headteacher	Mr R Chamberlain
Date of previous school inspection	2 June 2003
School address	High Street Foulsham Dereham Norfolk NR20 5RT
Telephone number	01362 683389
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Foulsham Primary is a smaller than average size school which serves Foulsham and the surrounding area. Children enter the Reception with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. Few pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or a statement of educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is less than in most schools nationally. Virtually all pupils are of White British and their first language is English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Foulsham Primary provides a satisfactory education for pupils. The school has judged its effectiveness as adequate and the inspection agrees. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are on course to reach the nationally expected standards in Year 6. However, aspects of pupils' writing and science skills in Year 6 are weaknesses. Average and more able pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and lower attainers make steady progress because of the increasing range of well-chosen programmes provided to boost their progress in English and mathematics. Last year, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 was below national expectations because too little attention was given to the effects of changes of staff.

Children make a good start in Reception and a significant proportion of children exceed the standards expected by the end of the year. Children make good progress because the teaching is well planned and continuously builds on what they already know.

Pupils' personal development is good because they are well known to the staff and each pupil has a big part to play in a small school. Attendance is good because pupils enjoy what the school offers. Pupils have a wide range of extra-curricular activities to attend, which they enjoy. The teaching is satisfactory. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning by giving them extra attention and building their confidence. Lesson planning ranges from good to inadequate. Some planning is not detailed enough to guide the teaching reliably.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The local authority has worked with the headteacher to write a crucial 'Raising Attainment Plan' (RAP) to guide the school's improvement. As a result, a group of pupils now receives extra support in English in Key Stage 2 and are making good progress. Governors support this initiative and have an understanding of what the school has achieved so far. The school knows itself better, but governors do not check closely enough that pupils are making the progress that they should.

This year, the school's leaders have responded positively to the need for changes in the way that the school works in order to meet its targets of the 2008. Teachers have a better knowledge of pupils' progress because they are now recording pupils' assessment scores and examining trends. Consequently, the school is providing sound value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The teacher in the Reception meets regularly with playgroup staff to discuss assessments of children's progress and the curriculum. This ensures that young children make a seamless move from playgroup to Reception and the process means that children make a really good and confident start to school. The Reception's outdoor classroom is exceptional. Children use basic items such as bricks, sticks and watering cans to learn to count. Every corner of the outdoor classroom is exciting and leads to learning. During a lesson about sequencing objects, children naturally developed sequences of three objects into sequences of five. Their learning quickly gathered pace because the adults gave children all the opportunities they needed to develop their thinking.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the rigorous implementation of the 'Raising Attainment Plan'.
- Raise standards in pupils' writing and science in Year 6.
- Extend teachers' daily planning for all subjects so that it is clear what pupils will know, understand and be able to do at the end of each week.
- Monitor pupils' progress more closely through regular visits by governors.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Boys and girls make similar progress. At the end of Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in Year 6 have varied from above to below average over the last four years, which is a common effect where there are small numbers of pupils in each year. Last year, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science was below average. Pupils' achievement declined significantly and targets were missed. The school did not do enough to compensate for the effects of changes in staff during the year.

This year, pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach their challenging targets. The school's records of pupils' progress and examples of work show that aspects of their writing and science skills are weaker. Pupils, for example, do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English or record enough science investigations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils understand the importance of looking after themselves through eating healthily and exercising frequently. Lunches are healthy and popular. Pupils feel safe and know that members of staff are ready to listen to any concerns they have. Pupils' attitudes towards work are positive and they enjoy school. They enjoy what the accommodation offers. Every corner has a purpose. Pupils feed wild birds, play games in zoned areas and exercise vigorously in the adventure playground. Consequently, behaviour is good and attendance is above average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils know right from wrong. Several letters from parents comment that children develop into well-rounded individuals because of the positive atmosphere in school. Pupils are enthusiastic about contributing to the school's development through the school council, as monitors and helpers. There is scope for the school council to do more; presently it does not meet often enough. The school has good links with local care homes and the Parish Church, and plays a full part in the local community. Pupils join their secondary schools adequately prepared academically and well prepared personally for the challenges ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers make lessons interesting. They provide a wide range of resources for pupils to use, such as when pupils solve money problems in real life situations in Years 1 and 2. Well deployed teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning because they reinforce ideas, ask pupils questions and prompt responses in such a way that they learn faster.

The quality of planning of lessons varies greatly across the school. Where teachers use their knowledge of pupils' learning from previous lessons to help plan the current lesson, pupils build on their previous knowledge in a logical order. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. At best, teachers clearly describe what pupils will know at the end of lessons, which skills they will have acquired and how pupils will be grouped to ensure that all are well challenged by their work. However, in a significant minority of lessons, planning is too brief and does not guide teaching well enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school implements the national strategies for literacy and numeracy adequately. Teachers plan the provision in Years 1 to 4 thoroughly and pupils are making steady progress. In many lessons, teachers plan effectively for higher attaining pupils, so that they have suitably challenging work to do. Curriculum checks in Years 5 and 6 have not been sufficiently thorough and contributed to a decline in standards last year. This year, the headteacher is making closer checks on what is taught to ensure that pupils receive the full National Curriculum. The school has a new, well equipped, information and communication technology (ICT) suite, which enhances the provision for a range of subjects.

A further improvement this year is that pupils have a wider range of extra-curricular activities to attend. Many pupils commented on how much they enjoy them. Sporting and musical activities are strengths. Pupils in Year 6 attend a residential outdoor activity centre, where they develop good team building skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Most parents say that the school provides well for their children. Typical of their comments is, 'We can't thank the school enough for their support and help.' The staff provide pupils with a supportive learning environment. Pupils learn to swim and make rapid progress. Teaching assistants work effectively with lower attaining pupils in classes. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective individual support so that they are able to make the progress of which they are capable. Arrangements for administering the safety of pupils are adequate. Pupils feel safe and many show that they are happy in school. They grow in confidence and self-esteem because of the good relationships between all. Pupils enjoy the many rewards that the school offers. During Friday assemblies, pupils receive public recognition for the good things that they have done.

Teachers' marking of work provides pupils with a broad idea of how well they are performing. Pupils do not have individual work targets to work towards, which young children have in

Reception. This year, teachers are well focused on ensuring that pupils meet their academic targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

In response to the school's significant drop in results last year, the headteacher has developed a pupil progress tracking system that gives teachers much valuable information about how well pupils are performing. Some programmes are in place to help pupils make better progress in English and mathematics and more are planned. The 'Raising Attainment Plan' prepared jointly with the local authority is coherent and shows that the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. The school has begun to implement the plan. All staff recognise the need for rigour if pupils are to meet the challenging targets set for 2008. As a result of this, a group of pupils now receives extra support in English in Years 3 to 6 and a second group is about to start in Years 1 and 2.

The governors make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement. They share in school development planning and ensure that the building is safe. Governors keep a close watch on the budget so that the school has money to spend on key projects, such as the new ICT suite. However, governors do not have a planned programme of visits to ensure that pupils make the progress that they should.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

12 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foulsham Primary School, Foulsham, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5ST

It was good to meet so many of you and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the school council and to those of you I joined at lunchtimes. This letter is to provide you with a flavour of what is in my full report.

Here are some of the good features of your school.

- You make a good start to your schooling in Reception.
- You make steady progress from Year 1 to Year 6 in reading and mathematics.
- You enjoy school because teachers and other adults care for you and help you to learn. You enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities.
- You work hard and get on well with one another.
- The school council is working well but you are right to say that you could meet more often and so do more to help the school.
- You make the most of what the school offers you, such as at the swimming pool where so many of you learn to swim and then improve rapidly.

Your headteacher and I have noticed that there are some things that the school can do to improve. I have asked your headteacher to:

- Quickly put into action all of the plan to improve your progress in lessons.
- Help you improve your writing and science knowledge in Year 6.
- Help the governors to keep a close watch on how well you are all progressing with your work.
- Help teachers plan lessons in more detail so that it is clear what you will know, understand and be able to do at the end of each week.

I hope that you will all keep on working hard, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

Yours truly

Roger Fry Lead inspector