

Fleetwood Flakefleet Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130336
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	315615
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr J A Matthews
Headteacher	Mr Mike Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2004
School address	Northfleet Avenue Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 7ND
Telephone number	01253 872884
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fleetwood Flakefleet is a larger than average school situated in an area of high social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and more pupils than usual have a formal statement of special educational need. The pupils are almost totally from White British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Children start school with skills and abilities that are significantly below those that are typical for their age. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall and by the time pupils leave school standards are significantly below average. The school agrees that standards are not high enough. Results of teachers' assessments and national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been low for the last five years and have shown no sign of improving. Results are declining and in 2007 were the lowest for several years. The school failed to reach its targets and this has been the case for several years.

Despite the low standards, the school has the confidence of the majority of parents. Most say their children enjoy school and are pleased that they are well cared for when they are there.

Although the teaching seen was mainly satisfactory, the overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. Teachers are not giving pupils enough time and opportunity to work independently. This means pupils are not managing to fill the many gaps in their learning. Teachers are not using marking and information gained from assessment to guide pupils on how to improve and move forward. There has been an improvement in planning and the management of pupils. As a result, lessons run smoothly and pupils say they enjoy learning. Support staff are used well to help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all statutory requirements and includes the opportunity to learn French. Staff widen pupils' experiences with an interesting range of visits and visitors. Good attention is given to pupils' personal development but their differing abilities are not catered for well enough. Pupils are taught how to look after themselves and many say they feel safe in school and understand the dangers of smoking and alcohol.

The overall quality of pastoral care is good. The learning mentor plays a full role in helping the more vulnerable pupils to deal with their difficulties. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils say relationships are good and they have many friends. Behaviour is generally good. Pupils' low basic skills do not prepare them well for their future.

The school has begun to move forward since the appointment of a new headteacher a year ago. However, leadership and management are inadequate overall because the leadership team, including the governors, is newly established and staff lack the necessary skills to monitor, evaluate and decide on actions that will raise standards. Management roles are not all clearly defined and some staff are not well deployed. New procedures to track pupils' academic progress enable the school to spot underachievement but the response to this is not sharp enough to overcome pupils' difficulties. Standards have fallen since the last inspection and governors have not sufficiently challenged the lack of improvement. The school has wisely sought the help of the local authority and is responding well to advice. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to stop the decline in standards and to make the school effective.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The warm and caring atmosphere in both the Nursery and the Reception class enables children to settle well. From a low starting point, children of all abilities make satisfactory progress although they do not reach the learning goals expected for their age at the end of the Reception year. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many practical activities are provided but staff are not always clear about what they want children to learn. This means that questions do not always focus enough on extending learning. Children enjoy choosing tasks for themselves and this aids their independent learning. However, because all staff lead a group activity there is no one available to check that all children are taking part and are engaged in purposeful learning. The staff do not interact with the children enough in role play to help to develop their speaking and listening skills. Management is developing but as yet is not effective because of limited opportunities to move between the separate Nursery building and the Reception class to gain a clear overview of standards and provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and increase progress especially in English and mathematics.
- Raise teachers' expectations and increase the level of challenge in lessons by including more opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Improve the marking of work and use of assessment systems to plan activities that will accelerate pupils' learning and inform them how to make progress.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation procedures to gain a more accurate picture of what needs attention and to draw up precise action plans to eradicate underachievement.
- Develop the monitoring role of the governors so that they play a more active part in helping the school to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement from Year 2 to Year 6 is inadequate overall. The school agrees that current standards are inadequate. The results of the teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 have been significantly below average for the last five years. In 2007, standards declined further in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the improvement in the Foundation Stage is enabling more pupils to make better progress in Key Stage 1, many do not make enough progress especially to exceed the basic level expected for their age. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards rose in 2004 but this was not sustained and the results of national tests in 2007 were the school's lowest for several years showing standards that were significantly below average. In English, fewer than half of the pupils reached the level expected for their age. Not enough pupils are reaching above average levels in English, mathematics or science. The school did not meet its targets because not enough attention has been given to tracking pupils' progress. With assessment procedures now in place, the school is in a better position to identify underachievement and to close the gap towards reaching its targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who have a statement of special educational need make good progress to overcome some significant barriers to their learning. Difficulties, including physical, social and emotional, are catered for effectively by well targeted help from experienced support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils learn to respect and understand their own and others' feelings well. Relationships in the school are good and pupils say one of the best things about school is having friends. Behaviour is usually good. Pupils generally show good attitudes to work creating a happy atmosphere in lessons. However, when lessons lack pace, pupils quickly lose interest and concentration flags. Attendance is about average. Pupils contribute well to the school community. Older pupils help the younger ones at lunchtime. School council meetings teach pupils about making decisions. They do this well especially when deciding how to raise funds to support a range of charities. Although pupils show initiative in lessons, not all teachers provide enough opportunities for them to work independently and, as a result, many do not develop the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. They are beginning to adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and to know the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating. However, weaknesses in their basic skills do not prepare them well for the next stages of learning and life.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and most recognise how their actions can hurt others. A few parents and pupils expressed a concern about bullying and the school is implementing new systems to highlight the importance of thinking about the consequences of actions. Pupils learn about their own culture, especially in art and literacy, but have limited knowledge of life in a multi-cultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The overall quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because major weaknesses in the teaching slow down pupils' progress. The pace of lessons is not brisk enough and a lack of variety in learning experiences fails to sustain pupils' interest. Although some imaginative resources are prepared, teachers do not fully exploit them to encourage pupils to come up with their own ideas. Lessons often include too much talking by teachers and an overload of instructions that confuses pupils and gives them few opportunities to work independently. Teachers work hard to improve the classroom environments with displays that celebrate good work as well as offering prompts to guide pupils. Lessons are managed well and run smoothly. Support staff make a positive contribution when pupils are working in groups. When extra help is not available, teachers find it difficult to keep pupils focused on their work.

Assessment systems are in place but are, as yet, not used effectively. The work in books indicates that tasks are often similar in what they demand of pupils of differing abilities. Tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and pupils say that some work is too easy. This results in pupils not making enough progress over time. Most teachers mark work regularly but suggestions on how pupils can make progress are not always included. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, work is often unmarked.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that help pupils develop well personally but less so academically. The school is trying to focus more on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy and in extending the use of these skills across the curriculum.

The information and communication technology (ICT) programme is improving and pupils are beginning to use computers for research in other subjects. The particular needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are addressed satisfactorily especially in the classes where they receive a lot of additional support. However, at times these pupils are taken out of class for support work and miss important parts of other lessons. The personal, social and health programme is satisfactory and is improving with more emphasis on health education and citizenship. It is beginning to enable pupils to gain more information about how to stay healthy and safe.

Clubs, visitors and visits enrich the curriculum. These experiences broaden the pupils' somewhat limited horizons. They talk enthusiastically about their visits to the theatre and enjoyed a fish and chip man's talk about fish caught locally. The school is responding well to national initiatives with its 'lets get cooking' club which has a good uptake by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers and support staff provide good pastoral support. Procedures to deal with pupils' safety are in place. Pupils know who to approach if they have a problem. The learning mentor supports the more vulnerable pupils effectively. When problems arise, pupils are given time to tackle any personal issues through informal chats that enhance their self-esteem and make them more receptive to teaching. The school works effectively with a variety of agencies for pupils needing extra support. This provides staff with clear guidance about how best to meet the wide range of needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress are satisfactory but not yet used fully or effectively. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly and identify underachievement but this is not yet effective in raising standards. The headteacher's thorough analysis of data has revealed where inaccurate assessment in the past has hampered the tracking of pupils' progress. Procedures for promoting attendance are effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. A lack of effective leadership by the governors, senior management team and subject leaders is standing in the way of pupils making satisfactory or better progress. The school's inadequate self-evaluation procedures are a major reason why standards are so low. For example, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough. As a result, issues such as pupils' books not being marked are not picked up and dealt with. There has been insufficient focus on providing subject leaders with the skills and the necessary time to monitor their subject areas. However, the school has begun to address this issue with training planned for the staff. The school's improvement plan does not show the steps needed to raise standards. The relatively new headteacher quickly identified concerns and sought help from the local authority. The school is responding well to this additional guidance and its impact can be seen in pupils' improved behaviour. The new tracking procedures enable teachers to know accurately the progress their pupils are making. These procedures have not yet had a positive impact on standards. The management of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and, especially, enables the pupils with statements of need to receive well organised support. Improvement since the previous inspection has been

inadequate and there is no evidence of sustained improvement in standards. However, there has been improvement in the use of ICT. Governors are supportive but do not challenge the school adequately. They do not monitor standards and achievement rigorously enough.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fleetwood Flakefleet Primary School, Lancashire, FY7 7ND

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited your school. You made us feel welcome and some of you were especially kind when we had difficulty finding a classroom. We were pleased that you said you enjoy school and this is clear because most of you attend regularly. In lessons you behave well and although you are very energetic on the playground most of you say that you feel safe and have many friends. Your love of physical activities, such as football, shows you understand how to keep fit and healthy.

There are quite a few things your school needs to do in order to raise standards, which are too low at the moment. To help you to make faster progress, the school is going to:

- Check that your teachers plan activities that challenge and interest you and also allow you some time to work on your own ideas.
- Make it clearer to you in the marking and in lessons what you need to do to improve.
- Focus more on what needs to be done to make your school a better place to learn.

Your school is going to have extra help so that it can improve as quickly as possible. Inspectors will return to check that your school is making progress.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well in lessons and listening carefully to your teachers. We wish you every happiness for the future.

Jennie Platt

Lead Inspector

(on behalf of the inspection team)