

# Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 110676              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Cambridgeshire      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 325195              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 10–11 February 2009 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Rhona Seviour HMI   |

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)                                                                         | 274                                                                  |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 0                                                                    |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0                                                                    |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                                                           | The governing body                                                   |
| <b>Chair</b>                                                                           | Mrs E Bush                                                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                                                                     | Mrs E J Womersley                                                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>                                              | 26 April 2006                                                        |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected                                             |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>                                           | Not previously inspected                                             |
| <b>School address</b>                                                                  | School Lane<br>Fenstanton<br>Huntingdon<br>Cambridgeshire<br>P28 9JR |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–11                |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 10–11 February 2009 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Fenstanton and Hilton is slightly larger than most other primary schools. Its pupils come mainly from the two villages after which it is named and most are from homes that are relatively socially and economically advantaged. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as are the proportions from a minority ethnic background or who speak English as an additional language. The school has a number of looked after children and more pupils with a statement of special educational needs and fewer with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is normally found. Pupils entering the Early Years Foundation Stage have skills that are broadly in line with those expected.

The school holds the Health Promoting and Eco Bronze and Silver awards and the Activemark award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Fenstanton and Hilton Primary is a good school that is highly successful in creating a happy and harmonious environment in which pupils thrive. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained the good quality of its work and pupils' personal development and well-being have improved and are now outstanding. This is due, almost entirely, to the way in which the school fosters pupils' sense of responsibility, guides their behaviour and develops their confidence and skills to play an active part in its work. By doing so, the school is preparing pupils outstandingly well for the next stage of their education and their future lives. The high quality of the care and support the school provides helps pupils to progress successfully from year-to-year and, in some cases, to overcome very significant barriers to learning. However, senior leaders agree that the school could do more to guide pupils academically, particularly by ensuring they have individual targets to accelerate their progress.

Achievement and standards are good, as at the time of the last inspection. Since then, the standard of writing has improved significantly and is now a strength of the school. In contrast, standards in science at the end of Key Stage 2, although average, have declined. Given their starting points, all pupils progress well, including those with emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties. This picture of good standards and achievement is largely a reflection of the consistently good or better teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Collaborative planning and team working amongst the staff contribute to consistency in the quality of teaching and ensure that teachers and teaching assistants are well aware of pupils' progress and individual needs. The good curriculum is adjusted regularly to reflect pupils' needs. Recent developments to promote pupils' questioning skills and ability to work independently are already having an impact and adding to their enthusiasm for learning and enjoyment of school life. At present, however, the curriculum does not give enough attention to broadening pupils' understanding of cultures other than their own.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. Staff are clear about the part they play in monitoring aspects of the school's work and, consequently, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. Increasing weight is given to pupils' views and their perceptive insights and suggestions are helping the school improve. Governors meet regularly and, like the staff, have an accurate understanding of areas for improvement. Although passionately loyal and supportive of the school, they provide the critical challenge it needs to improve. The school uses its resources well and provides good value for money. Its committed leadership and governance give it ample capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enjoy their time in Reception because the provision is of good quality. The curriculum is varied and captures the children's interests. It allows them to explore and investigate for themselves both in the classroom and outdoors. Staff are skilled at noting children's progress and make sure that activities provided are matched well to their abilities. In addition, a good balance is provided between activities led by staff and those that the children choose for themselves. During their time in Reception children make good progress. They achieve particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development because they are exceptionally well supported by the staff. As a result, the children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children are confident, secure in their relationships and work well

together. Their enthusiasm is evident in their wholehearted approach to learning. For example, they were highly motivated and excited when accompanying their teacher on a magical journey to a castle and preparing invitations for a grand ball. Leadership and management are effective. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has an excellent knowledge of child development and, supported by a strong team, ensures that the curriculum is well suited to the children's needs.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in science by giving pupils increased opportunities to use and apply their scientific knowledge and understanding.
- Ensure that all pupils have meaningful individual targets in English, mathematics and science and that these are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Strengthen pupils' cultural development and the school's work in promoting community cohesion by ensuring that pupils have more opportunity to learn about diversity within British society and other parts of the world.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

During their time at the school, pupils achieve well. When they enter Reception, their skills are in line with those expected and by the time they leave, at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average. Since the last inspection, standards in writing have improved steadily so that by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English is now higher than that in mathematics or science. In 2008, attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved but, as in the previous two years, it declined in science. This is largely because pupils have not had enough opportunity to engage in scientific enquiry.

Since the last inspection, there has been some variation in the rate of pupils' progress but this has never been less than satisfactory and often good. No pupils underachieve and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or English as an additional language make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress. This is because of the very close attention paid to pupils' individual needs and the high level of support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. It is also due to the careful tracking of pupils' progress and the wide range of strategies used to combat any barriers to their learning. The last inspection judged that the school's targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were insufficiently challenging. This is no longer the case. The school's targets for the percentage of pupils reaching and exceeding the national expectations in 2009 and 2010 are stretching and ambitious.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The school environment is happy and harmonious. Pupils show much enthusiasm for learning and enjoy their education. Their attendance is good and, because of the high expectations of the staff, they behave extremely well. They participate well in the wide range of physical activities provided, showing an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, fit and safe. Their knowledge of how to maintain a healthy diet is particularly impressive. In lessons and around the school, pupils are very courteous and considerate. They support each other well and are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they need help. Their social, moral and spiritual development is good. Pupils show a keen interest in other cultures but do not know enough about people from different backgrounds. Pupils are actively involved in decision-making in both the class and school councils. During council meetings, they consider

issues sensibly, listen carefully to each other's views and express constructive ideas and solutions. They have an excellent understanding of what it means to contribute to their school community and readily take on responsibilities which they fulfill with great maturity. Pupils' well-developed skills, combined with their very confident and positive approach to learning, are an excellent preparation for their future education and employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The strong commitment and enthusiasm of staff helps to make lessons interesting and this is reflected in pupils' motivation to learn. Good questioning keeps pupils involved, encouraging them to explain and expand their ideas. In most lessons, the pace of learning is appropriate to the nature of the activity and the ability range of the children. On occasions, the pace of the lesson slows; this results in some pupils losing concentration and reduces their enjoyment of learning. Teachers work purposefully to assist groups and individuals during independent work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective personal and academic support from teaching assistants. In most lessons, work is pitched at the right level. Classroom behaviour is managed very effectively and, as a result, pupils are able to develop relatively sophisticated skills in cooperating, negotiating and working together. Marking has improved since the last inspection and now helps pupils to identify the next steps in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is adapted well in response to pupils' individual needs and places equal emphasis on their personal and academic development. It links different subjects well and provides pupils with a good range of first-hand, practical experiences. It also includes a number of original features. The 'collapsed' curriculum, during which learning focuses on particular themes for a day or more, was devised through consultation with pupils and helps foster greater independence. In addition, there is an innovative and creative project to help pupils to become more active learners and stimulate their ability to ask questions and think critically. These elements, together with opportunities they have to play an active role in the school, provide pupils with an excellent preparation for their future education and citizenship. Nonetheless, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures within Britain and elsewhere in the world. The school is rightly reviewing the curriculum in information and communication technology and the assessment of pupils' capability in the subject, both of which are slightly outdated. Contributions by visitors, educational visits and the good range of extra-curricular activities add to the variety of pupils' experiences.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and some aspects are outstanding. Staff are highly committed to meeting the needs of individual pupils and they care for and support the pupils outstandingly well. In particular, the support provided for the most vulnerable pupils, including those who do not speak English as their first language and those who are looked after, is exemplary. Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the support they receive is very

well organised and carefully tailored to their needs. To complement its own provision, the school works successfully with an extensive range of outside agencies and visiting specialists, and liaises very closely with parents. There are effective systems and strategies for managing pupils' behaviour and improving the attendance of the few who are persistently absent. The school meets all the legal requirements for safeguarding the pupils and carries out the necessary risk assessments.

The quality of academic guidance varies. Although pupils receive good academic guidance through the marking of their work and verbal feedback from teaching staff, the use of individual targets to accelerate pupils' progress is underdeveloped. For instance, pupils do not have targets to aim for in all subjects and the practice of reviewing and setting targets is not sufficiently regular to provide pupils with the challenge they need to give of their best.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership is good at both senior and subject level. Leaders are very committed to the school and to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve. The staff work as a cohesive, mutually supportive team and, like the pupils, they are proud of the school and keen to see it do well. The school monitors its work effectively and its self-evaluation is largely accurate. It is willing to change the way it works in order to bring about improvement and, in some cases, this results in innovative practice. The project to develop pupils' learning skills is a good example of this. Pupils' involvement in aspects of the school's self-evaluation and decision-making is a distinctive feature of its leadership and management. The school and class councils have an increasingly prominent part to play in identifying aspects of the school in need of improvement. The 'Every Child Matters' agenda provides an effective framework for the school's improvement planning. Nonetheless, although there are higher school targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 than at the time of the last inspection, the current improvement plan does not focus sharply enough on raising academic standards. Too often, the success of actions within the plan is judged by their completion rather than their impact, particularly on standards.

A quarter of the parents completed the inspection questionnaire and the vast majority of responses were positive about all aspects of the school's work. The school engages very well with its local community, including other schools, outside agencies and some 'hard to reach' families, but does not have an explicit plan for promoting community cohesion. The governing body has given good attention to improving external communications, one aspect of which has been the construction of a new school website. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and, while supportive of the school, they have the confidence to challenge it about aspects of its work.



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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 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|

### 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?                                                         | 1   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements                                                                                                   | 2   |

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

|                                                                                           |   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?              | 2 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve?                                                 | 2 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?                          | 1 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?                                 | 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/or disabilities make progress                           | 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.

## Personal development and well-being

|                                                                                                               |   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 1 |
| 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                                                             | 1 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education                                                            | 1 |
| The attendance of learners                                                                                    | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners                                                                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

## The quality of provision

|                                                                                                    |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 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 |

## 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 eliminated                                                                   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?                                                                                   | 3   |
| 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                                                  | 2   |
| 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fenstanton and Hilton Primary, Fenstanton, PE28 9JR

We recently visited your school and this letter is to tell you about the results of our inspection. First, on behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for your help during our visit. We were very impressed by your politeness and friendliness and the welcome you gave us in lessons and around the school.

We agree with you and your parents that Fenstanton and Hilton is a good school. You make good progress there because teachers and teaching assistants know each of you well and give you a great deal of help and encouragement. Lessons are interesting and planned so that you become skilful at working with each other. There are many different activities to help you learn. Some of you told us, for example, how much you enjoyed finding out about John Howland, the pilgrim father, and working with a university professor. We think that the school is particularly successful at helping you to develop as responsible young people. Your personal development is outstanding because you behave very well, think of others, attend school regularly and enjoy learning. You get on well with each other and with the staff. The class and school councils help you learn how to express your opinions, listen to other people's views and make decisions which affect the school.

We think Mrs Womersley and all the staff are a good team. Like us, they think the school can be even better. To achieve this, we have asked them to do three things. These are:

- to make sure that each of you has targets to aim for so that you achieve even more
- to help you learn more about the different backgrounds of people in our country and other parts of the world
- to make sure you do better in science.

Finally, we would like to congratulate you on your achievements - both you and your parents should be proud of these. We were very pleased to find that Fenstanton and Hilton Primary is such a good school and hope you continue to make the very best of your time there.

Yours sincerely

Rhona Seviour

Her Majesty's Inspector