

Forest Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124532
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328156
Inspection date	30 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	256
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	60
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Brooks
Headteacher	Ms Maria Curry
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bury Road Brandon IP27 0FP
Telephone number	01842 810309
Fax number	01842 810644

Age group	3–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether achievement and standards could be said to be consistently high and often exceptionally so, whether there are significant outstanding elements to pupils' personal development, whether there are significant outstanding features to teaching and the curriculum, and whether there are significant strengths in the Foundation Stage.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and governor representatives. In addition, there was observation of parts of several lessons, scrutiny of school information and its self-evaluation statement, analysis of samples of pupils' work, evaluation of parents' questionnaires, and discussions with pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average size school serving the town of Brandon near Thetford. It is a first school, taking children from the age of 3 to 9 years. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with levels of knowledge and skills which are slightly below those normally expected. The number claiming free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British, though a small minority are from other backgrounds and have a first language other than English. A very few of these are in the early stages of learning English. A smaller number than average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and there are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved Healthy School Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils make exceptional progress. By the time they leave the school, they attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and, very often, standards are exceptionally high. There are also outstanding arrangements to ensure children in the EYFS are appropriately supported and thus make extremely good progress.

The school's success arises from the remarkably clear vision and purpose shared by the headteacher, governors and the caring and committed staff team. This results from the outstanding leadership and strong direction given by the headteacher, supported by her able senior management team. The extremely positive ethos and happy family atmosphere are evident on entering the school. The school environment is modern, bright and stimulating. It is challenging and at the same time nurturing, so pupils become well-rounded individuals. As a result, pupils not only achieve extremely well academically but their personal achievements are exceptional. It is not surprising that parents are highly appreciative of the school. One wrote 'I consider Forest School to be an excellent school and the staff are friendly and easy to talk to. I recommend Forest Primary to all my friends.' This comment represents the views of many who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils echo this sentiment in their demonstration of exceptional levels of enjoyment and good attendance.

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral and spiritual development is outstanding. Their cultural development is good, which represents good progress since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept responsibilities, allowing them to grow in confidence. They take pride in helping others and in looking after each other, their school and the environment beyond. They take their jobs around school very seriously and really make a difference to the smooth running of the school. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and how to keep themselves and each other safe. The combination of excellent literacy and numeracy skills and their highly developed personal skills equips pupils extremely well for the next stage of education and life. For example, enterprise projects involve them working within strict time constraints to conduct market research, production, marketing and handling a budget. Providing outstanding care and guidance is central to the school's ethos and includes systems for ensuring high levels of health, safety and welfare. A sample of documents inspected confirmed that safeguarding procedures meet with requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that there is always someone to help them with any problems. Adults go the extra mile to reduce any barriers to learning and make sure that everyone is included in everything that the school has to offer.

The good curriculum is well focused, with thorough planning to ensure the development of important basic skills. A carefully thought out programme of personal, social and health education successfully helps to encourage pupils' remarkable personal skills. Pupils enjoy a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs that go beyond the required subjects and which pupils say they enjoy a great deal. Further enrichment includes relevant visits out and visitors to school, and the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language. The curriculum has been improved through occasional planned themed weeks, which involves teaching several subjects through topic themes in creative and exciting ways. This approach is already used consistently and outstandingly in the EYFS but is still evolving across the rest of the school.

The headteacher has astutely developed the leadership capacity of other school leaders so that everyone can make their full contribution. One parent summed this up appropriately when they

said 'Management of the school is second to none. The headteacher's dedication to the pupils and their education is exceptional. She leads the staff team effectively and allows them to be very much a part of the process and to take on responsible roles and to develop their skills further.' This results in an accurate view of strengths and areas for development and combines with high expectations to ensure challenging targets are set and met. Governors offer a good deal of practical support, know the school well and are looking forward to further developing their involvement in analysing the school's work and presenting challenge to its leaders.

The school places itself at the heart of its community, forging very positive and highly effective partnerships with parents and outside agencies and promoting harmony extremely well. An outstanding example of this work is the published 'Brandon beginnings and belonging' book, produced by pupils to celebrate the Forest School community. Pupils explored the different events that brought the Brandon and school communities together from different places across the globe, researching their family histories and 'journey stories' with parents, grandparents, and others.

There is no doubt that outstanding leadership and management have ensured that the school has continued to go from strength to strength since the last inspection and that this evidences excellent value for money and an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children do extremely well in the Foundation Stage because their needs are met exceptionally well. They settle quickly because of the excellent support and knowledge of staff who get to know them very well and because parents are well included in the learning process. Children feel secure and ready to learn because of the outstanding relationships formed between the staff, the children and their parents and carers. Key worker systems are well established. Exciting activities and topic themes are carefully planned, based on an accurate knowledge of children's progress and needs and an excellent understanding of the EYFS curriculum. As a consequence, and in combination with good and often outstanding teaching, children make outstanding progress from whatever their starting points. Therefore, children exceed the standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, with children being given time to discover and explore their ideas. Their personal development is remarkable, with independence being established and responsibility for resources being taken right from the start. A high quality of care and welfare is assured, with all the requirements being met, and children also being taught successfully how to minimise risks for themselves. Highly effective leadership has ensured that the setting can evidence remarkable progress in a relatively short space of time. For example, exceptional curriculum provision has been established outdoors, which includes an array of opportunities for children to make progress in all areas of their learning through either the built or the natural environments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further extend and embed across school, the creative and integrated approach to delivering the curriculum.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

1 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Community Primary School, Brandon, IP27 0FP.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

There are many outstanding things about your school. Some of them are that:

- you achieve high standards and make excellent progress
- you behave extremely well and work hard to help others
- your knowledge of how to keep yourself healthy and safe is outstanding
- you enjoy school a great deal and the school is good at organising interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are extremely well cared for and looked after
- your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are highly effective at making sure that you get an outstanding education.

We agree with your parents that you go to an outstanding school. However, all of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them with this the most important thing for them to do next is:

- continue to develop right across school the way that teachers plan to teach you different subjects through exciting topic themes.

We are sure that the headteacher and all the other staff will continue to do everything they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to behave so well; working really hard and coming to school every day.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector