

# Fairstead Community Primary School

## Inspection report

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120906
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	329679
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Mitcheson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

<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)	259
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>	Interim executive
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Sale board
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Suzanne O'Connor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2008
<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>	William Booth Road Fairstead King's Lynn

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	329679

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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

This is a larger than average primary school serving the east of King's Lynn, an area with significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British heritage although a small but increasing number come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need is well above average. The proportion of pupils that leave or join the school at times other than the start of term is above average. Attainment on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is well below the national average. The school was inspected in January 2007 and was judged to require special measures. Since September 2007 an acting Headteacher has been in post and an interim executive board has overseen the governance of the school.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 14 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has made significant progress in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and now provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. A highly effective acting headteacher has guided the school through a difficult period of change and improvement. She and her senior leaders have improved the quality of teaching and learning, raised achievement and improved the overall quality of education for all pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural education are good. The 'Four Cs' of Co-operation, Care, Concentration and Celebration underpin the welfare of pupils and are used well to reinforce expectations and promote friendship. Assemblies include time for singing, prayer and reflection. Pupils attend regularly and behave well. They feel safe and say that when bullying occurs staff deal with it promptly. Pupils told inspectors that, 'we enjoy school and want to learn now because lessons are fun'. They eat healthily and participate in regular physical education lessons, active break-times and after school sport. An excellent school council seeks the views of other pupils, act as 'buddies' to support others and coordinates fund-raising for school and community projects.

Improved monitoring by leaders and managers has led to better quality teaching and learning. This has helped to accelerate the progress pupils make and raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, although this is not consistent across all classes. Standards in both key stages are below average, but based on their very low starting points, the majority of pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make satisfactory progress. Pupils are confident readers but the quality of their writing particularly spelling, punctuation and presentation is less secure. Regular assessments give teachers a good understanding of how well individual pupils are doing and which of them need additional support.

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection due to improved monitoring and by sharing the good practice shown by a number of teachers. Despite this, some inconsistencies remain in the marking of pupils' work and use of computers to aid learning. Pupils contribute well during questioning and discussion. Teachers organise tasks so that pupils can work together, by themselves and learn in small groups led by teaching assistants. This engages the interest and attention of pupils of different ages and abilities and contributes directly to the progress they make.

A satisfactory curriculum meets all statutory requirements. National guidelines for promoting literacy and numeracy are used well and have had a significant impact on developing pupils' communication and calculation skills. Science and information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, but less established than other subjects are. The school has rightly focused its efforts on raising achievement in English and mathematics in order to raise overall achievement and secure pupils' economic well-being. New co-ordinators have introduced improved planning and resource materials to develop these subjects but it is too early to see the full impact of their efforts on overall standards. A satisfactory range of enrichment activities such as sports coaching, cooking and crafts add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and well-being.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's caring ethos provides a welcome haven for vulnerable pupils and those that have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers and

support staff know pupils well and coordinate good individual support to meet their specific needs. Senior managers provide teachers with good quality information about the pupils in their classes so that work can be matched to need and ability. Pupils receive appropriate guidance to help them meet challenging targets, but day-to-day marking of their work does not always explain what they need to do to improve.

The acting headteacher has shown exceptional leadership to transform the school from one that was recently failing to one that is now thriving. Staff share her vision and work collaboratively and relentlessly to improve the school's effectiveness. Pupils told inspectors that, 'the headteacher has made a big improvement to the school'. She has welded together an effective senior leadership team. The capacity to make further improvements is good. Middle leaders have greater responsibility for school improvement but this is not fully embedded across all subjects. The interim executive board fulfils its statutory duties and works to secure the long-term governance of the school. Value for money is satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Considerable improvements have been made since the last inspection to ensure that children get off to the best possible start. Classrooms and shared teaching areas are safe, stimulating and caring environments in which to learn. Children are actively engaged in a wide range of activities and thoroughly enjoy school. They are looked after well by caring, committed teachers and support assistants. Staff and children have created an excellent indoor 'jungle' to learn and play in and the quality of wall displays is excellent. Secure outside areas help to promote children's physical development through movement and outdoor play. Based on their exceptionally low starting points, most children make good progress in all six areas of learning. Effective, well planned teaching and good links with parents that begin with home visits prior to their child's arrival allow children to settle in quickly and thrive. A good curriculum helps to promote children's personal, social and emotional development, which is good. Progress in developing communication, language and literacy skills is less pronounced and additional training is under way to improve this. Leadership and management are good.

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school
- Achieve greater consistency to teaching and learning by sharing the existing good practice in the school and monitoring its impact on the quality of teachers' marking and opportunities to use ICT
- Strengthen subject leadership and management so that the improvements made in literacy and numeracy become firmly embedded into science and ICT.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards in Key Stage 1 are improving. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics increased this year but few pupils attained higher level 3, reflecting the weaker nature of the cohort. Standards in Key Stage 2 have also improved and this year's results have exceeded the targets set in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining level 4 in English increased from 41% in 2007 to 62% this year and mathematics improved from 43% to 57%. Similarly, results in science rose from 55% to 67%.

Standards in writing are much lower than in reading, mainly because teachers have focused their efforts on teaching pupils to read. Filling the gaps in pupils' learning has been more successful in Years 5 and 6 than Years 3 and 4 where the legacy of weak teaching in the past still lingers. In general, girls do better than boys do in most classes.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' behaviour is good and exclusions are rare. Rewards for good behaviour, regular attendance and hard work are highly valued by pupils. They display positive attitudes and told inspectors that they get on well with each other and that they really enjoy school. Pupils know which staff to turn to if they have concerns. A small number of Polish, Portuguese and East European pupils integrate particularly well into school life. Attendance rates have improved and are equal to the national average, but a small minority of families who take holidays during term time compromises attendance rates. The school council's recent community project to raise funds for talking litterbins has been a great success.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils display positive attitudes and find lessons fun and interesting. Good relationships exist between teachers and pupils and there is mutual respect for each other. Pupils receive feedback about their progress through marking, but this is not always clear enough and not all teachers check that pupils act on the advice given. Increasing numbers of pupils are assessing their own work and taking time at the end of lessons to reflect upon what they have learnt. Interactive whiteboards capture the interest of learners but opportunities for pupils to use computers are limited. Lesson monitoring has created a culture in which teachers are keen to learn from one another, provide support and share good practice. This is leading to significant improvements, but has not yet extended into all subjects or the teaching of writing.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school ensures that all pupils receive their full entitlement. It has strengthened the curriculum by allocating sufficient time for core and foundation subjects. Guided reading and a focus on promoting literacy across all subjects is helping to develop pupils' reading and use of language. Personal, Social and Health Education lessons develop pupils' social and emotional learning and includes opportunities to learn about sexual health and substance misuse. Residential trips and visits by local theatre groups help to support pupils' cultural development. A large number of pupils learn to play violin or brass instruments.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The school ensures that pupils are safe and well cared for. It works well in partnership with outside agencies such as the 'Cinder Project' to promote the well-being of vulnerable pupils. Good procedures are in place to support pupils and their families as they start school and when they transfer to the local high school. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive adequate support to help them achieve. Regular meetings and coffee mornings for parents

allows them to meet staff and find out how well their children are doing. Procedures for monitoring how well pupils are progressing are good. They have contributed directly to improving standards because teachers know what pupils are capable of and whether they are making sufficient progress to meet challenging targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The Headteacher has not allowed a significant building project on the school site to deflect her attention away from raising achievement and standards. The project has been carefully managed and when completed, a new nursery, sports facilities, library and office space will be welcome additions to the school. Staff morale is high, teachers and teacher assistants work collectively as a team and complement each other's work well. The effectiveness of the acting headteacher, senior and a growing number of middle leaders places the school in a strong position to improve further and build on its recent successes. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on robust systems to monitor how well the school, its pupils and staff are performing. Effective partnership working with the local authority has helped to validate the school's own view of itself and coordinate the external support it has needed. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Despite its efforts to gain the support of parents the school acknowledges that it needs to do more to engage fully with the local community.



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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 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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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

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

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairstead Community Primary School, King's Lynn PE30 4RR

Earlier this week a group of inspectors visited your school. Thank you for making us feel welcome, taking time to talk with us and show us some of your work. We also met your teachers and a school governor. We found that Mrs O'Connor and her staff have made lots of improvements to your school and it no longer needs visits from us to see how well it is doing. It is now providing you with a satisfactory education.

You are looked after very well and are given many different and interesting things to do. We were very impressed by your work about the Olympic Games and thought the 'Wow' board was excellent. You are kept safe, healthy and behave well. Your attendance has improved a lot, mainly because you like coming to school. We met with the school council who were fantastic. They told us that pupils get on well with each other, behave much better than in the past and care for one another in the playground. The project to raise money for the talking penguin bins was a great idea - well done!

The care and support that you receive from when you start school all the way through to the end of Year 6 is good. There is always someone to talk to if you have concerns. You know that your teachers and assistants are always there to help you.

You told us that football and netball are popular and there is not much that you would change. You are much better readers than writers and we would like you to improve your writing and use computers more often. To help the school become even better than it is we have asked Mrs O'Connor and her staff to make the following improvements:

- improve the quality of your writing
- ask teachers to share what works well in their lessons so all of your lessons are good ones
- spread the improvements made in literacy and numeracy lessons into science and ICT lessons.

Mrs O'Connor leads and manages your school very well. You can help her by using the suggestion box to let your school council know your views on what further improvements could be made and ask them to share your suggestions with her.

Once again, thank you for your help and we wish you all well for the future.

John Mitcheson

Her Majesty's Inspector.