

Fourfields Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110754
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337564
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Richardson

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 of pupils on the school roll	391
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Barnes
Headteacher	Mr Graham Gossage
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including 170 responses to the parental questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the amount of progress pupils make in each year
- how the school helps pupils who are falling behind in reading
- work being done to raise standards in writing, particularly for boys
- How the school promotes good attendance, and the well-being of each child.

Information about the school

The school serves the expanding village of Yaxley and numbers have continued to increase since the last inspection. Most pupils are White British, and a small minority have other ethnic backgrounds. A very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the number with a statement of special educational need is high. A pre-school playgroup and an out-of-hours club use community premises on the school site. The school gained the Investors in People award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2007, and the International School award in 2008.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Fourfields is a good school that cares outstandingly well for its pupils. Strong leadership by the headteacher and effective teamwork by the whole staff ensure that pupils thrive, enjoy their learning and achieve well.

Pupils make good progress in learning, whatever their starting point, reaching standards that are broadly in line with the national average. Progress is particularly good in reading because of strong encouragement to enjoy books, and well-targeted individual help if pupils are falling behind. Progress in writing is slower, but improving.

Teaching is good. Teachers plan well and are clear about what pupils need to learn. A 'Big Picture' board in each class informs pupils about the learning planned for the term so that pupils can see what they are working towards. Teachers engage pupils' interest and manage classes well so that pupils become good learners. It recognises that assessment is not always used to take full account of pupils' capabilities, and that teachers' use of time and teaching methods do not yet consistently ensure that pupils are getting the very best out of their learning. The school provides much to enjoy beyond the classroom, including a wide range of clubs and activities and special events.

Pupils are very aware of how they are expected to behave. The school sets out its values clearly and fosters positive attitudes, for example about 'never giving up', 'encouraging others' and 'doing your best'. These are translated into practical action, as seen in pupils' persistence with their work and in their cooperation with others.

The school takes exceptional care in safeguarding pupils and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of each individual. The school's large team of teaching assistants are trained and deployed well to support pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils are confident about turning to adults for help. A 'please listen' box in each class enables children to seek help if they encounter difficulties, and pupils speak positively about how staff help them to resolve problems.

The school understands what it does well and where it could do better. It is ambitious to raise standards further and is intent on fostering outstanding teaching in order to do this. It recognises the need to use assessment more purposefully to set sights high and to take full account of pupils' capabilities.

Since the last inspection, the school has pursued improvement, for example in finding ways to engage boys more in their learning, and in widening pupils' cultural horizons. The school's self-evaluation is honest, accurate and probing. The views of pupils and parents are sought and acted upon. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school that is shared with governors and staff. The role of the 'leadership and support team' of senior staff is being developed to monitor provision and more effectively drive

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improvement across the school as a whole. All this provides the school with good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise pupils' attainment further, improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - Varying the pace of teaching, to ensure that pupils achieve as much as possible in the time available
 - Employing a variety of approaches to inspire and motivate pupils, and to extend enthusiasm for writing
 - Promoting active and critical listening by pupils in asking and answering questions and building on each other's ideas
 - Focusing the monitoring of teaching on identifying and sharing highly effective practice.
- Improve the use of assessment to raise standards and accelerate progress towards ambitious targets, by:
 - Involving pupils more in evaluating their own learning and striving to improve
 - Analysing weaknesses in writing and addressing these consistently through marking and teaching
 - Taking more precise account of different capabilities in the planning of lessons, especially in terms of consistent challenge for more able pupils
 - Ensuring that leaders are involved in diagnosing underachievement and planning action for improvement throughout the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are keen and attentive learners who gain knowledge and understanding in their lessons, and practise skills thoroughly. They develop good habits in getting on with their work, concentrating well and trying hard. Pupils enjoy school life, in and out of the classroom.

National test results over the last three years have been broadly average, although few pupils reach a high level in writing. The school has identified that boys' attainment lags behind that of girls, most notably in writing at Key Stage 1, and is taking action to close this gap.

Pupils make good progress over their time in school from their different starting points, and many make more than the progress expected. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, often make particularly good progress.

Pupils feel safe and secure at school. They behave well and are highly responsive to the school's clear guidance about how they should conduct themselves. Pupils have a

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mature understanding of healthy lifestyles, knowing the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. The school has a strong sense of community and pupils of all ages take great pride in doing jobs to help others. The rate of attendance is in line with the national average and improving.

Pupils develop extremely well socially and morally, because of the way that values are discussed with them and woven into every aspect of school life. They learn to show good manners, to cooperate amicably and to understand their own and others' feelings. Pupils have a growing understanding of different faiths and cultural traditions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good across the school. Classes are well managed, creating good relationships and a positive climate for learning. Lessons are well planned with clear aims, and teaching builds effectively on previous learning. Teachers explain clearly and hold pupils' attention. They ask questions well and encourage pupils to talk about their ideas, though not always encouraging responses to other pupils' ideas. The pace of lessons is usually good, but not always tailored to maximise learning. Teaching

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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frequently engages pupils practically and actively, although this is not always the case. Teaching takes good account of different levels of attainment, though not always providing consistent challenge for the more able. Teaching assistants support learning well, working closely with teachers. The teaching of pupils who find learning difficult is often highly effective.

Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and are becoming increasingly accurate in monitoring progress. Pupils sometimes have goals to work towards and are encouraged at times to evaluate each other's work, though they are not consistently challenged to improve and to aim high. Teachers mark work carefully. They question pupils well in lessons to check understanding and to give further explanation where this is needed. The school provides a broad curriculum and is reviewing it in order to further enrich learning. The school offers an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Visits, visitors and special events, such as an International Week, broaden pupils' horizons and add to their enjoyment of learning. The school adapts its provision where needs are identified. For example, it provides an extensive and effective programme of one-to-one reading support for pupils in danger of falling behind.

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are outstanding. Adults, including the large team of support staff, are well trained to meet the needs of individual pupils. Organisational arrangements such as those to ensure first aid cover at playtimes are constantly kept under review and refined as needed. The school is highly alert to the needs of vulnerable pupils and intent on overcoming barriers to learning, for example by providing individual mentors. The school is highly effective in managing behaviour so that pupils settle quickly and succeed in learning. The school works closely with families and other agencies, for example in reducing levels of persistent absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for improving the school and raising attainment. He is developing the school's leadership and support team in order to strengthen sustained and coherent action in achieving the school's ambitions. The school's leaders have a clear view of the quality of teaching, and ways in which this can be improved further. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' progress, and is developing ways of ensuring that teachers' assessments are followed through into action for improvement across the school as a whole.

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The governing body discharges its duties effectively and works vigorously to ensure the well-being of pupils and staff. The school is highly inclusive in nurturing each child as an individual. The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is outstanding. Staff and governors are thoroughly trained. Comprehensive policies and regularly updated procedures ensure that a realistic and proportionate approach to the safety and safeguarding of pupils runs through all aspects of school life.

The school reaches out to parents, emphasising the importance of home and school working together. Parents are kept informed about the work their children are doing and the progress they are making, and they are regularly welcomed into school. Their views are sought and acted upon; a good example was when parents asked for more feedback about homework. The school is developing pupils' international understanding very effectively, and also auditing its wide-ranging contribution to the welfare of the local community in order to extend this further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle into school well, taking great enjoyment in their learning and the wide range of activities provided. Children enter the school with skills and understanding below the levels expected for their age, but make good progress towards the early learning goals set nationally for the end of Reception. Staff recognise that progress is slower in writing and in mathematical development than in other areas of learning and are taking action to remedy this. Strong foundations are being laid in reading.

Constant attention is given to children's personal, social and emotional development.

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Staff guide children well, sensitively responding to their individual needs and building on their prior learning. The staff provide good role models, gently nurturing kindness, sociability and cooperation. Children rapidly gain confidence and independence, learning to look after themselves and to consider others.

The large outdoor area is a source of great delight for children, who become intently absorbed in all the activities provided. Staff carefully introduce new activities which children are then able to pursue by themselves. The indoor area is well used, but activities are not always organised and resourced to fully challenge and extend independent learning. Children enjoy participating in group activities guided by an adult, but the size of these groups is sometimes too large to keep all children actively involved. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well so that children make a happy and successful start to their school career. Each child is known as an individual and excellent relationships are established with parents.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents are happy with their child's experience at Fourfields, and this view is well founded. Almost all parents say that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps children safe and encourages a healthy lifestyle. Parents strongly appreciate the way that the school works with them, welcomes them and seeks the best for their children. A very small minority are not happy with the way that the school deals with poor behaviour, or takes account of parental concerns. The inspection team found that the school is highly effective in managing behaviour so that pupils feel secure and learn undisturbed. The school actively seeks parents' views and takes account of them, and the inspection team found that concerns about individual children are usually dealt with quickly and effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fourfields Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 170 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 391 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	46	88	52	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	83	49	80	47	5	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	26	99	58	16	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	28	100	59	13	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	31	106	62	5	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	28	102	60	14	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	34	104	61	2	1	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	29	98	58	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	29	105	62	7	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	25	94	55	15	9	8	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	21	100	59	17	10	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	61	36	89	52	9	5	6	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	40	93	55	4	2	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 September 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Fourfields Community Primary School, PE7 3ZT

We enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for talking to us. Now I am writing to tell you about what we found. We think that you go to a good school, where good teaching helps you to learn well and to make good progress. You are particularly good at reading and we are glad that you enjoy books so much.

Some of you filled in questionnaires for us, and these told us that you like the way that the school cares for you, and that you learn a lot in lessons. We were interested to hear about the 'Please Listen' box in each class and we think that is a very good way to help sort out any problems. You behave well and try to be polite and thoughtful, and that makes the school a good place for everyone.

You have a lot of interesting work to do, like finding out about different countries, and you are lucky to have so many clubs too. We think that the school is outstanding in the way that it looks after you so well and gives you help when you need it.

The headteacher and all the staff keep thinking about how to make the school even better. We have been talking about ways in which teaching could inspire you to reach higher standards, particularly in writing. We think there should be more ways to show you how to improve your work. You should be more involved, too, in thinking about where you could do better.

The school wants you always to do your best, and we wish you well in doing just that. Thank you again for welcoming us to your school.

Yours faithfully

Joy Richardson

Lead inspector

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