

Fordham CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110788
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337573
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Canham

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth McNaughton
Headteacher	Kevin Bullock
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons and observed eight teachers. The inspectors also held meetings with governors, staff and a group of pupils, and talked with pupils in lessons. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including assessment and attendance information, lesson plans, safeguarding arrangements, school development planning, governing body minutes and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised the 64 questionnaires received from parents, as well as those from staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- the impact of work to tackle inconsistencies in pupils' progress and raise attainment, for different groups of pupils
- the impact of the revised leadership and management structure on the school's direction and capacity for sustained improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school that serves the village of Fordham and other villages nearby. The very large majority of pupils are from families of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Among its awards, the school has National Healthy Schools status, the Activemark, and Investors in People.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This outstanding school is rightly prized by the local community. Staff, pupils and parents are proud of their school and the education it provides. The very caring and supportive environment provides a solid foundation for the school's work. It successfully nurtures an ethos of self-esteem and respect for others, which is central to the school's happy and harmonious learning community. Consequently, pupils have outstanding attitudes to school, relishing opportunities to develop leadership skills and take on additional responsibilities. This picture is reflected in the questionnaires completed by pupils where the very large majority indicated that they really enjoy school. Pupils work exceptionally well in pairs and independently. These very strong features have a positive influence on pupils' outstanding progress, high levels of attainment, and excellent personal development. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent's comment sums up the views of others: 'The ethos of the school responds to the needs of the local community and, although it might be viewed as old fashioned in some respects, it is effective and works well.'

With close support from staff, skilful and resourceful leadership at the very top has developed a school that is totally committed to gaining the best provision and outcomes for all pupils and their families. Together with support from knowledgeable and well-informed governors, school leaders have an accurate understanding of where the school is now and of the improvements needed. These strengths provide a solid platform for learning and show that the school is extremely well placed to move forward.

The school has developed an outstanding curriculum that places each pupil at the heart of its work. Together with consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching, and pupils' own hard work and positive attitudes, this results in exceptionally good progress. Consequently, work in lessons reflects the consistently high attainment levels seen in the school's national test results for the last three years for pupils in Year 6. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils benefit from well-paced lessons where they enjoy using their own ideas and working together. Subjects are often linked in innovative ways and detailed assessment procedures support successful teaching, which entices pupils and motivates them with interesting activities. These features enthuse and challenge pupils. Typically, activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. However, in just a few lessons, the most-able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks at the beginning. The school has accurately identified that attainment has the potential to be even higher if work were always matched more tightly to the needs of these pupils. Intervention work, including focused support for individual pupils, is very successfully at making up for lost ground in learning for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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Popular clubs and after-school activities provide pupils with many opportunities to develop interests and their creative and performance skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards by consistently providing challenging tasks in lessons that are pitched at the right level, particularly for the most-able pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The pupils' sheer enjoyment of learning stands out along with their eagerness to become fully involved in interesting and stimulating activities in English, mathematics and geography, for example. In assembly, pupils sing enthusiastically, tunefully and with much confidence. Pupils' very positive attitudes are characteristic of lessons and indicate the outstanding progress which pupils make in lessons. As a result, attainment is high. In English, pupils are full of imaginative ideas when writing poems and demonstrate a good understanding of the skills needed to turn poetry into different forms of descriptive writing. Pupils show a great deal of independence and self-organisation when work is particularly enticing. They work very productively in pairs and small groups and are highly supportive of each other. Pupils also show great pride in getting the tasks right and explaining the reasons behind their answers, in mathematics and geography, for example.

Children join Reception with expected levels of attainment. From this point, pupils make outstanding progress and reach high standards by the end of Year 6, as indicated by the results of national tests and assessments over the past three years. The school exceeded its challenging but realistic targets for both English and mathematics in 2009. Pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach higher levels of attainment with significant proportions on course to gain levels above those expected of pupils with the same age. There are no significant differences between the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Friendship is something pupils cherish about their school. Pupils say they love coming to school and thrive in the highly supportive and caring environment. Respect and consideration for each other are at the core of the school's work. These strengths underpin the impeccable behaviour and caring approach taken by pupils who get on extremely well with each other. Pupils are happy, confident and willingly take on responsibility, including acting as monitors and house captains. Pupils' thoughtful behaviour is an outstanding factor in their successful learning. All these qualities contribute to the harmonious school community and make it one in which, 'We all have high expectations of each other, including children, parents and teachers, and that's why it works so well.' as one pupil reported. The school council provides very good opportunities for pupils to represent the views of others and develop leadership qualities. Helped by the school's innovative projects to encourage enterprise, such as those involving local businesses, pupils' personal skills are developing into important assets for future life. Pupils show exceptionally good levels of understanding about

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personal safety in and out of school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The wide range of high quality displays gives an insight into the richness and diversity of the curriculum. The curriculum provides a careful balance between basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the development of pupils' performance and creative skills in subjects such as physical education, music and art. The teaching of French adds a further positive dimension. The curriculum also takes very good account of the wide range of ability. The school has given additional attention to English early in Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils' rate of progress is maintained during the transitional stage from Reception. This strategy is highly successful and attainment levels have risen sharply. The curriculum is underpinned by the good use of information and communication technology, which enhances learning and gives pupils access to a range of resources and opportunities for independent research. Pupils' experiences are further enriched by numerous trips locally and beyond, including a residential trip to Dorset, and by a very well planned programme for personal, social and health education.

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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Consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching is at the hub of the school's high standards. Key strengths include a brisk pace and precise questioning that probe pupils' understanding and grab their interest. Topics are used particularly well to link subjects and reinforce and develop key skills. There is an occasional lack of challenge for the most able. Timely reminders during lessons draw out misunderstandings and quickly guide pupils back on the right course. Teaching assistants give well informed and close support to individuals.

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding and have a demonstrable impact on improving outcomes for pupils. The exceptional pastoral care for pupils' personal development is recognised and highly valued by parents and carers. 'An excellent school that I am proud to be part of..... and a great foundation for life,' one parent reported. The close attention to pupils' health and well-being is reflected in the many opportunities for physical activity and the provision of healthy school meals. Individualised programmes of support are successfully drawn up for vulnerable pupils, covering a number of personal and learning needs. These programmes are supplemented by rigorous tracking of each pupil's progress. Very close liaison with parents and outside agencies and focused individual attention enables those with the greatest needs to gain the necessary confidence and self-esteem to be successful learners.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Highly effective leadership and management have ensured consistently outstanding outcomes for individuals and groups of learners. With very strong support from governors, the headteacher has established a school that radiates a passion for, and commitment to, developing each pupil's self-esteem and maintaining high standards.

Committed staff readily take on areas of responsibility and share in the school's collective leadership. They feel very well supported and their high expectations of where they want their pupils to be by the end of each year demonstrate a strong capacity for moving on.

The school promotes equality and tackles any form of discrimination extremely well. The school's monitoring procedures are very effective in identifying the needs of pupils and, as a result, all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. Staff and governors have a very clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

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Governors work very closely with the school and share in its rigorous monitoring and evaluation. They have exceptionally good links to all aspects of the school's work. Very detailed and well organised procedures ensure that safeguarding arrangements are carefully followed. The school uses well embedded and reliable quality assurance and risk assessment systems.

The school's work in partnership with other organisations and schools is excellent and includes valuable links with the pre-school provision. Detailed planning shows a systematic approach to developing and sustaining links and partnerships with other schools nearby, outside agencies and businesses. The school has an excellent understanding of local needs and global challenges. It has also developed strong links nationally and is fully involved with recycling projects, and providing food for orphans in Sudan, for example. Parents are given a wide range of opportunities to give views on the school, and benefit from regular newsletters and access to the school's website.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Working in close liaison with the local pre-school provision, children's needs are identified early. Exceptionally good leadership and management make certain that detailed planning takes very good account of children's starting points. Consequently, well-planned topics ensure all areas of learning are covered with a particular focus on reading, speaking, listening, writing, and number skills. Adults respond skilfully and highly effective support is given to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children happily move from one activity to another. They listen attentively, play together very well, and thoroughly enjoy participating in a wide range of

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stimulating activities. Children can not wait to explore activities and find things out for themselves while chattering constantly to each other. New experiences, both indoors and outdoors, captivate and charm children so they make exceptionally good progress in all areas of learning.

Working closely with parents, staff give closely targeted support to both teacher-initiated activities and those which children choose for themselves. Children are nurtured from the very start. As a result, they settle quickly, are eager to learn and are very well prepared for entry to Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all questionnaires were positive, and the written comments expressed considerable satisfaction with the school. These included positive remarks about the caring and supportive environment, the effectiveness of leadership, and the quality of teaching.

A very small minority of parents and carers recorded reservations over a very small number of issues, including the level of communication. These reservations were not reflected in the very large majority of comments and the inspection found evidence to indicate that the school is developing its website to increase the amount of information for parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fordham CofE 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 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	64	22	34	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	46	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	48	31	48	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	55	27	42	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	70	18	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	59	23	36	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	53	30	47	0	0	0	0
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)	36	56	24	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	50	27	42	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	45	32	50	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	41	29	45	3	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	72	17	27	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	72	17	27	1	2	0	0

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.



Wednesday 24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fordham CofE Primary School, Ely, CB7 5NL

We very much enjoyed our visit to your school and thank you for making us feel so welcome. This letter is to tell you about some of the things we found while we were with you. Yours is an excellent school that serves your local community particularly well. You are exceptionally good at helping to make the school run smoothly and help people in Fordham and others areas nearby. You told us it is also a place where you want to be, make lots of friends, and enjoy taking part in the many interesting and exciting clubs and activities. All but a very small number of your parents are happy with the school.

Here are some more important things about your school.

You make good, and sometimes excellent, progress in lessons and you enjoy your work. Your work often shows creativity and imagination.

You are considerate towards each other.

Staff take exceptionally good care of you, and make sure that you know exactly what to do to keep safe.

You have an excellent understanding of what makes for a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating.

This is what your school has been asked to do to make things even better.

Make sure that teaching always challenges those of you who learn the quickest.

You can help by continuing to work hard at the tasks and activities you are given. We wish each one of you every success in your future education and hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Paul Canham

Lead inspector

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