

Fakenham Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120805
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	339781
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Theo Fanthorpe
Headteacher	Lesley Cook
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 11 classes taught by 11 teachers and looked at a range of pupils' work. They met with: members of the senior leadership team and other staff with responsibilities, pupils from the school council, pupils from Year 5 and Year 6 and three members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan and other documentation, particularly that relating to safeguarding and child protection. The inspectors also scrutinised 123 parent, 93 pupil and nine staff questionnaires.

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

- the effectiveness of support for lower attaining pupils in mathematics
- how effectively the school supports literacy skills across the curriculum
- whether the school successfully raises pupils' aspirations.

Information about the school

The school is average in size. Most pupils are White British. There are a small number of pupils from Pakistani, Indian and European backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As part of its extended provision the school operates family support services and provides community access for swimming. There is a breakfast and after school club which is managed privately and is subject to separate inspection. The school has gained Healthy School status.

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

This is a good school. Many aspects of the school have improved since it was last inspected. This is because the leadership and management of the school are good. The school's self-evaluation is extremely accurate, as is its identification of priorities for further improvement. It monitors what it is doing carefully and extensively, identifying quickly where additional support or improvements are called for. The school now has a detailed and extensive system to monitor pupils' progress and uses this information well to identify those pupils who are at risk of slipping behind so that appropriate support can be put in place.

Teaching has improved and is now good. Pupils make good progress in lessons, achieving well. As a result, of this improvement, overall standards show incremental year-on-year improvement. Standards in mathematics and science were just above average in 2009 indicating good progress from their broadly average starting points in Year 3. Standards in English showed a similar improvement up to 2008, but dipped in 2009 because the school did not gain as many higher levels. The school development plan has standards as a central focus. Other action plans are not as fully effective because there is insufficient focus on identifying how the planned initiatives will impact on pupils' outcomes. However, given the track record since the last inspection, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

Pupils' personal development has improved. Attendance is average but pupils enjoy school and learning. A group of pupils characterised the school as 'fun, helpful, useful, safe, challenging, friendly and healthy.' They also recognised that it had improved. Behaviour is good. Pupils report little bullying and are confident that staff will sort out any problems that they might have. Because pupils are polite, courteous and friendly, the school has a warm and purposeful ethos.

Pupils feel particularly safe in school, a view held by almost all parents. Staff know the pupils extremely well as individuals and provide outstanding care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils are happy and confident; they have high self-esteem because they feel that they are listened to. Pupils take their various responsibilities seriously, such as the playground buddies, making a good contribution to the school and local community, through for example, their musical activities or a delegation reporting to the Town Council about the state of the adjacent disused graveyard. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and many have taken steps to put theory into practice by taking full advantage of, for example, the many sporting opportunities that the school provides.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in drawing up action plans, staff identify the expected impact of the initiatives they are planning on pupils' outcomes so that the initiative is not only defined with greater precision but its success judged more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In the large majority of lessons, pupils work with concentration; keen and engaged, they work with other pupils well and settle quickly. They are confident to give extended answers, explaining their thinking and demonstrating their understanding of what they have learnt in the lesson. Improving pupils' progress in writing has been a school focus and the various and well considered initiatives have resulted in recent success in raising standards of pupils' written work. Lower attaining pupils are supported effectively in mathematics and achieve well as a result. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress as do pupils on the register for special educational needs and/or disabilities because of the quality of support and the interventions that the school makes.

Pupils reflect well on their lives and the lives of other people, developing their skills of empathy. For example, in one lesson, pupils were asked to write about Sanjit living in his village Chembakolli. Clearly much work had been undertaken to develop an accurate, rather than stereotypical, view of his life in the village and the reasons why he decided to leave. Pupils also have a good understanding of the rules of the school community, demonstrating their respect for others, listening with interest in assembly to a visitor as he informed them about the Native American religious beliefs. Pupils develop good social skills through the many opportunities that they have to work together. Their awareness of the diverse nature of society is satisfactory.

The school lays the foundation for their future economic well being well; hence, pupils are well prepared for their next step in education. Their academic skills are enhanced by their positive attitudes and the opportunities that they have to take responsibility and show initiative.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which stimulates pupils' enthusiasm and is a contributory factor in the good progress that they make. Talk partners are used effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to rehearse their ideas, share knowledge and engage all pupils in discussion. Classrooms are managed well so that no time is lost in managing pupils' behaviour and lessons maintain a purposeful pace. Classroom assistants are used well and effectively support identified groups of pupils. Good use is made of an imaginative range of resources to support learning. In the best lessons, work is well matched to the needs of different groups, pupils are constantly challenged and given good opportunity to develop their independence as learners. In a small number of lessons, not all pupils are as effectively challenged or supported by the planned tasks; very occasionally teacher questioning is not as probing as it could be in order to demand more precise thinking, particularly from higher attaining pupils.

Assessment is used well to provide pupils with information on how to improve their work. There are good systems in place to accurately assess and record pupils' progress and therefore intervention programmes are targeted well. Marking is regular and pupils respond to teachers' comments.

The curriculum is monitored well and there is ongoing refinement to ensure progression of skills and concepts. Since the last inspection there has been a greater focus on developing skills across the subjects of the curriculum and in developing writing skills. The enrichment opportunities are good, making a significant contribution to pupils' overall enjoyment of school. The many visitors to the school also contribute to helping raise pupils' aspirations, for example a number of boys responded very positively to the

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Royal Air Force visitor. The range of provision for personal, social and health development is also good.

Transition arrangements between the infant and secondary school are excellent. The school works exceptionally well with a wide range of external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The use of the Sound Discovery programme has led to good and sometimes excellent progress of pupils with reading difficulties. There are strong links with the local pupil referral unit to support the school in managing the behaviour of the few pupils who present particularly challenging behaviour. The school is very supportive of individual pupils' needs, providing bereavement support and anger management sessions. It also anticipates staffing training needs to support pupils likely to arrive in the school in the future. There is excellent support for some children and their parents through the parent support adviser and the pastoral support worker. The systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are rigorous. The local authority attendance officer, the parent support adviser and the pastoral support worker work with individual pupils and their families at home and in school to improve attendance, serving penalties if necessary. A common approach to term-time holidays has been developed with local schools.

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 leads the school well and is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher. They work well together. The senior leadership team is also effective hence extending the good leadership across the school. In addition, there is a strong sense of teamwork amongst the staff, shared values and a professional and open culture in which skills are shared. The monitoring of teaching is regular, effective and coupled with professional support has brought about significant improvement. Further work is effectively addressing the occasional shortcomings that still exist in lessons and helping to raise the teaching from good to outstanding.

Governance is good. The governing body takes its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding very seriously. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are good with some aspects very strong. For example, the school is rigorous in pursuing concerns about individual children, providing very detailed reports when requested by external agencies. Governors are very supportive but also do provide appropriate challenge. Although slightly under strength, there is a good range of skills and experience. Finance

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is tight because the school roll is falling but governors are thinking strategically and planning ahead.

The school has a very inclusive philosophy. The sustained focus on improving standards and raising the achievement of specific groups of pupils has been effective. The school uses its data well to identify and support underperforming groups. Hence, it is making a good impact on equality of opportunity across the school. The school is a very cohesive community. It makes good use of the rich resource provided by pupils from other heritages, often involving the whole family, for example, in giving presentations about their culture. The school is also a natural focus of the local community and involves pupils well in the local area. Developing links with a school in France and an orphanage in Kenya are extending pupils' global awareness. The school has well developed plans to further develop pupils' first hand knowledge of the wider United Kingdom community because this is not yet as strong as other aspects of community cohesion.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents agree their children enjoy school and are happy with their child's experience at the school. Almost all parents think that the school keeps their child safe. A small minority have reservations about the school's leadership and management, how it deals with unacceptable behaviour and the way it takes into account their suggestions and concerns. The school is led and managed well bringing about significant improvement since it was last inspected. Overall behaviour is good. The school has a small number of pupils who are on behaviour support plans who learn to manage and

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improve their behaviour over time because of the consistent positive way the school manages pupils' behaviour. The governing body canvass parents' views annually through a questionnaire seeking their views to inform their decision making but there is often a limited response. A small minority had concerns about their child's progress because their class has had a number of changes of staff because of illness. The headteacher is monitoring the class's progress carefully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fakenham Junior 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 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	37	69	56	6	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	61	50	61	50	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	26	76	62	11	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	26	74	60	15	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	31	75	61	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	24	76	62	16	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	34	72	59	7	6	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)	36	29	68	55	3	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	24	78	63	8	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	21	72	59	17	14	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	22	73	59	14	11	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	26	68	55	13	11	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	32	73	59	9	7	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fakenham Junior School, Fakenham, NR21 8BN

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome in your school. We enjoyed our brief stay very much. I would also like to thank those pupils who gave up some of their lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was very helpful. I would like to share our findings with you.

This is a good school. Because you do lots of interesting things in lessons and your teachers are skilled you make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are similar to what you see in many schools. The school helps you develop as young people well. You behave well, take your many responsibilities very seriously and most of you have adopted a healthy lifestyle. You feel safe, say that there is little bullying and are confident that staff will sort out any problems that you might have. This is because the staff provide you with outstanding care, guidance and support.

The school is led well by the headteacher and has improved many aspects of its work since it was last inspected. Many staff draw up plans to improve aspects of the school's work. I have asked the headteacher to ensure that these plans identify more clearly the impact that the planned activities should have on standards by identifying clear success criteria, so that staff can check how well they have achieved their plans. This is similar to the way in which you use success criteria in your lessons to check how well you have achieved the lesson objectives.

The school has come a long way in a relatively short time because staff have worked hard. I have no doubt that it will continue to develop and improve especially if you carry on helping by maintaining your enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector

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