

Finedon Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121869
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340031
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Peet
Headteacher	Avril Wise
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, one of whom spent half a day inspecting safeguarding. Inspectors observed eight lessons; all five class teachers were seen at least once. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Vice-chair of governors, and a group of pupils. Many pupils were informally spoken to. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Twenty one parents' and carers' questionnaire returns, and those completed by all staff, were analysed.

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

how well boys attain and whether they make enough progress, particularly in literacy, from Reception upwards

- how well pupils in the current Year 2 achieve and progress
- whether the curriculum gives all pupils, especially those in Year 1, equal opportunities to do well
- whether teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 effectively meet the needs of different groups of pupils
- how effectively staff with responsibility contribute to school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school of its type in an urban setting. Virtually all pupils are of White British origin, with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that of most schools. Most have moderate learning difficulties, speech and language disorders or emotional and behavioural problems. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are four classes in total, two of mixed Reception/Year 1 pupils and two of mixed Years 1 and 2 pupils.

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

Finedon Infants' school has maintained the standards found at the time of its previous inspection, despite the turbulence experienced in staffing following its recent entry into a Federation with Finedon Junior school.

Pupils make good progress from their starting points. They achieve well and their attainment by the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing was below that of reading and mathematics in the 2009 national assessments. Boys' attainment was much lower in all aspects that year and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities did not do as well as similar pupils nationally. The effective use of new systems to track pupils' progress and take remedial action has already significantly reduced the difference between boys' and girls' attainment and improved the achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The recent federation with the junior school benefits the school in many ways, for example, the sharing of expertise and the seamless transfer of infant pupils to the junior school. Pupils also enjoy a wider curriculum, enriched by many extra activities such as science and mathematics weeks, Africa day, book fairs and sports festivals.

The headteacher is head of both schools and in the short time since her appointment has effectively communicated her vision for improvement and high standards to staff and governors of the infant school. As a result, staff with leadership responsibilities are effectively involved in school improvement initiatives. Common procedures and processes, including a team which leads on English and mathematics in both schools, are helping to embed effective methods of monitoring and evaluating pupils' learning and progress.

Pupils' good progress is a result of the good and consistently improving teaching they receive. Teachers are enthusiastically embracing new assessment methods and using them well to provide challenge for the wide range of age and ability in their classes. High expectations for pupils' success are apparent in every classroom. Effective strategies are in place to develop writing, but attainment in it, though broadly average, still lags behind that of reading and mathematics. Not enough use is made of opportunities to develop writing in other subject areas. Modern computer systems have only recently been introduced in the school and both teachers' and pupils' skills are lower than in many schools.

Pastoral care is good and appreciated by pupils and their parents, all of whom agree that their children are safe and well-cared for. Pupils are well behaved and this has a positive effect on their learning. They enjoy their lessons and active playtimes, which

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help them learn about living a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school in many ways. They all take classroom monitor roles; all Year 2 pupils play a role in ensuring safe play through the 'playground squad'. The school council, set up with help from junior school pupils, leads on fund raising for charities. Pupils are very proud of the amounts they raise for good causes.

The many important changes introduced by the headteacher have had significant impact already, improving the achievement and progress of boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' effective use of new assessment methods is a major improvement, and there have been many benefits to pupils through the federation's contribution to the school's leadership and curriculum. The school is now in a good position to build on this and improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- improve the standard of writing to match that of reading and mathematics by making sure that writing is developed as rigorously in all curriculum areas as it is in literacy lessons throughout the school
- develop pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
 - ensuring that teachers' skills are up to date
 - using interactive whiteboards effectively in lessons as an aid to communicating and developing important concepts
 - providing pupils with more regular opportunities to use computers to support learning in lessons
 - ensure that there are always clear learning objectives when children in the Early Years Foundation Stage use computer equipment.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with attainment below that expected nationally, particularly in early literacy and numeracy skills. They make generally good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment is close to that expected nationally. Writing skills generally lag behind reading and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 have made good progress from low starting points and are on track to reach demanding targets for reading and mathematics, though still lagging behind in writing.

There are no marked differences between the writing standards of boys and girls. There are good examples of written work in the 'learning logs' of pupils in both Years 1 and 2, who enjoy completing these at home. Linking letters and sound work in both these years is pitched to the needs of specific small groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Gifted and talented pupils are given advanced problems to solve in mathematics which challenges them well.

Year 1 pupils are divided between four classes, but evidence shows them to be making equally good progress and exceeding their challenging end of year targets. There are missed opportunities for developing writing across the curriculum. For example, in

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science lessons, pupils were seen to have good ideas about suitable mini-beast habitats, and were recording their ideas, but their writing was not as good as that seen in English lessons. Pupils did not get much opportunity to develop their computer skills in any of the lessons seen.

Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy their learning, including the many clubs such as engineering, for example, where they were challenged to devise a structure from spaghetti and marshmallows, to support a small 'Playmobil' figure. They say, and their parents agree, that there is virtually no bullying and disagreements are quickly sorted out, often by the 'playground squad'. Relationships are very good in the school and pupils are secure in the knowledge that adults will always listen to their troubles. Assemblies help pupils to understand shared values of different cultures and religions. They develop good social skills and a strong sense of right and wrong. Attendance is satisfactory and, given their sound academic skills, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education.

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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' good progress results from the good teaching they receive. Teachers have made rapid progress in using the recently introduced assessment systems. In a mathematics lesson, pupils from Years 1 and 2 were given multiplication and division problems well matched to their current level of learning. Two gifted pupils had an individual problem solving activity. Teachers encourage pupils to begin to evaluate their own progress through 'steps to success'. They set older pupils appropriate targets for improvement. Teachers use a variety of methods to make lessons interesting, but are not yet using the interactive whiteboards to their full effect, nor are all pupils using computers consistently in their work.

The curriculum presents many opportunities for pupils to widen their experiences through focused topics, for example on science or mathematics. A wide range of visitors such as African artists give pupils an exciting insight into the wider world beyond their school and homes. Recent changes have resulted in more emphasis on the development of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum and these are starting to impact on pupils' achievements.

The school nurtures all its pupils, so they feel confident to approach any adult with worries or concerns. Their parents agree they are well cared for. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them access all aspects of the curriculum and develops their self esteem. The work of the Parent Support Advisor and well developed links with outside agencies enables good care to be given to vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils and their families are given very good guidance when starting school. Federation links ensure that moving on to junior school is a smooth transition.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Since her appointment, the headteacher has introduced many initiatives to improve standards. School self evaluation is good, shown by the way that underachievement by boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been identified and successfully reversed in the current year. Now all have equal opportunity to succeed in lessons and careful use of funding ensures that all can take part in enrichment activities.

The governing body supports the school well and the vice-chair and members of the curriculum committee rigorously monitor the quality of provision. There have been

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recent changes in leadership, however, and new governors are receiving training to become fully effective in their role.

Safeguarding is good because governors and staff at all levels are all well trained, particularly in child protection. The school has adopted recommended good practice across all areas of its work. Most parents agree with their children that they are safe in school. Procedures are regularly updated to take developing technologies, such as those relating to the internet, into account.

There is a good sense of community within the school, where adults and pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging and caring for each other. The school has a strong partnership with parents and families, which continues into the junior and secondary schools through the parent support advisor linked to all three schools. The school benefits greatly from being part of the Federation, in particular where it shares leadership and curriculum expertise.

The school plans for, and promotes, community cohesion well. It has good links with the local church and pupils have strong views on local problems such as litter and parking. They learn about different cultures, for example, through assemblies where they consider that many different people can be British. Even though they may look different, they are the same underneath. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups are fully integrated in all aspects of school life. The school is twinned with a school in Uganda and has recently been enjoying learning about African culture.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

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Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below those expected for their age, particularly in early literacy. Consistently good teaching by all adults who work with the children ensures that they make good progress and thoroughly enjoy learning. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority have attained the early learning goals in most areas of learning, but considerably fewer attain these in writing. Measures to improve writing already show signs of being effective and children currently in Reception are making better progress in this area. As a result, they are reaching higher standards of writing than in the past. Children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. They fully understand the class routines and take very little time to settle attentively on the carpet after play. They line up in an orderly fashion for assembly, where they behave impeccably

There is a well-equipped learning environment both indoors and outdoors with free-flow use of both teaching areas. Children enjoy a good mix of adult-led and independent learning through play. During the inspection they enjoyed sorting two dimensional shapes. Boys and girls enjoyed preparing meals in the cafe and the construction work, where they had opportunities to write lists. Some free play activities, such as sand, water and 'play-dough' could be improved by being more closely linked to specific learning objectives relating to problem solving. Children's social skills are good and they work and play well together.

There is a good curriculum that includes activities across all the areas of learning. Some use is made of computers, and the interactive whiteboard, but children were not always sure of their objectives when using them. There are regular small group sessions to develop early reading and mathematics skills. The teaching in these is good and children make good progress.

Good leadership ensures planning is good and effective use of the good assessment systems ensures that adult led activities are matched well to the different abilities of the children. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Good relationships with parents and carers extend children's learning into their homes.

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

Most parents who responded to the questionnaires were very positive about the school. Some said how pleased they are about the many positive changes in the school this

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year. They praised the headteacher and teachers, whom they said are always available to discuss their children. Others, however, did not think they had as much information about progress, particularly as their children moved up from Reception to Key Stage 1. Several parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 said how pleased they were with the 'learning logs' which helped them focus on their children's learning at home. Inspectors found that the school has a good partnership with the majority of parents and does as much as most schools to keep parents informed about their children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Finedon Infant 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 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 119 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	76	4	19	1	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	76	5	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	62	6	29	2	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	62	7	33	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	62	7	33	1	5	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)	13	62	7	33	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	57	8	38	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	43	11	52	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	52	9	43	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	62	8	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	50	14	50	0	0	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

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.



14 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Finedon Infant School, Wellingborough, NN9 5JG

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed the time we spent with you. You told us that you think yours is a good school and we agree with you.

These are some of the things we found to be good in your school.

Your headteacher runs the school well. All the adults take good care of you. You can always talk to someone if you are worried.

Teaching is good so you enjoy your lessons and work hard, so you do well, particularly in reading and mathematics.

You behave really well, and come to school wanting to learn, and this helps you make the most of your school days.

You have lots of clubs and special days when you learn about Africa, for example.

You know how to live a healthy lifestyle, enjoy lots of sport, and try to eat healthy food.

You learn how to keep yourself safe when visitors tell you about road safety, for example.

You take on lots of responsible jobs as classroom monitors, and in Year 2, the playground squad. Your school council is rightly proud of the money raised to help other children in the world.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to do the following things:

To help you improve your writing so that it gets to be as good as your reading and mathematics

To make sure you use computers more in all your work.

I hope you will continue to work hard and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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