

Fritch Green Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130900
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	341055
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keir Johnston
Headteacher	Helen Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Five lessons and two sessions of 'Challenge Time' were observed. All teachers were seen as well as the breakfast club and after school provision. Meetings were held with the chair of governors, a group of 'creative parents', groups of pupils, the school council and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, pupil progress tracking information, the school's analysis of current attainment and a range of pupils' work. Ninety two questionnaires completed by parents and carers were analysed.

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

- pupils' current rate of progress and their attainment
- how teachers keep track of pupils' accomplishments within the innovative curriculum
- how well the school challenges more able pupils.

Information about the school

Flitch Green Primary is a new-build school and the first in Essex to comply with 2006 building regulations to conserve energy and reduce carbon emissions. The school, in terms of staff and 55 pupils, came into being in September 2008 although they did not move into the building until the end of that month. The school serves the immediate area of recent housing development with a small number of pupils from the nearby village of Felsted. The number of pupils on roll has doubled since opening. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. The school provides a breakfast and after school club.

Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A very small number of pupils are learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.

The school is an Apple (computer) Regional Training Centre. The centre provides training for educators, advisors and staff from other schools in the use of computers for creative learning. It has 100 laptop computers. The school works to be sustainable so parents are contacted by email with information about school events and receive weekly newsletters from their child's teacher.

The school has attained the national Healthy Schools Award and the Eco-Schools Bronze Award.

A pre-school run by an outside provider uses a spare classroom within the school. A separate report is available for this provision.

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

Flitch Green Primary is an outstanding school. The headteacher's and governors' uncompromising vision of a school where pupils are 'happy, safe and learning' is met exceptionally well. Management is outstanding, consequently staff morale is high and all share ambitious aims for the school's future. Parents have many good things to say about the school such as, 'fantastic', 'exceptional', 'magical'. Everyone, pupils, staff, governors and parents, is rightly proud of their school. The outstanding capacity to sustain and build on what the school has already achieved is based on sharp self-evaluation and extremely high aspirations. Priorities are exceptionally well focussed with high expectations for pupils' academic and personal growth.

The list of school strengths is long and there are no real weaknesses.

Progress is good overall but, for pupils in Reception and Year 1 who started their education at Flitch Green, it is outstanding. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average, particularly in English, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Behaviour is impressive, especially when pupils work independently. They are kind, considerate and supportive, proud of their achievements and those of their many friends.

At the heart of the school's success is its outstanding, innovative curriculum. Whilst ensuring pupils acquire skills in basic subjects such as English and mathematics at a good rate, pupils also learn and practise key life skills such as resilience, reflection and risk taking. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their future. As one parent commented, 'What more can you ask for when your children come home from school and can't stop talking about all the great things they have done in their school day'.

Teaching is outstanding because it is based on precise assessment. Lessons are fun, interesting and packed with activity. Teachers and teaching assistants make sure that the work is challenging for all groups in the class.

Pupils' awareness of keeping themselves safe, fit and healthy is outstanding. They demonstrate their very good understanding of a healthy diet through their choices of school dinner or in the contents of their packed lunch. A high number of pupils involve themselves in the good range of sporting activities on offer.

Children in Reception make outstanding progress, particularly in their independence and enthusiasm for learning.

Parents are impressed with the exceptional care, guidance and support for their children. Pupils are known as individuals and their work is highly personalised. The safeguarding of pupils is good.

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Governance is outstanding. Governors share the headteacher's high aspirations for the school but are not afraid to challenge or question. They ensure statutory requirements are met and that each pupil has the same excellent opportunities to benefit from their time at Fritch Green.

The outstanding extended school provision (breakfast, after-school club and provision of clubs) reflects the school ethos extremely well. The vision of 'home from home' is achieved exceptionally well at breakfast club.

There is one area where staff and governors recognise that further improvements can be made.

Teachers have recognised that on joining the school, frequently, pupils have gaps in their mathematical understanding. The school recognises that it has to devise meaningful ways in which these pupils can practise and consolidate their skills and concepts.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further in mathematics by:
 - applying the school's creative approach to providing even more opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate skills and concepts.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Data and pupils' work show that pupils who have joined the school mid-way through their primary education make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make at least good progress. Staff are very knowledgeable and quickly spot pupils' difficulties and put excellent strategies in place to help individuals. This prompt attention is particularly beneficial for the older pupils joining the school; their parents speak highly of the school's provision.

On entry to Reception, attainment is broadly below that typical for the age group. However, within this 'broadly below' picture of attainment there are small groups of children whose attainment is either above or well below that typically found. Importantly, all groups make outstanding progress from their starting points. Attainment in Reception and Year 1 (almost all of whom are children who have started their education at Fritch Green), is above average in reading, writing and mathematics and high in ICT.

Enthusiasm and perseverance are key features of pupils' learning, together with their ability to apply skills learned in many subjects to problem solving or 'challenge activities'. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 can plot co-ordinates on an Anglo-Saxon archaeological dig, write a description of the artefact they find and present their findings to their class using ICT.

Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own work and do so very honestly and can state what they need to do to improve it further. For example, Year 1 pupils examine photographs they have taken and can explain in detail how they will improve next time.

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More able or pupils who are talented or gifted in a particular area make good and frequently excellent progress because they have opportunities to work alongside older pupils or have expert help from staff or volunteers.

Pupils' personal development is demonstrated very clearly in 'Challenge Time'. Groups have a different challenge each day. For example, in Reception, a group has a challenge of mixing colours using white. In Year 5 and 6, a group is challenged to separate salt grains from sand. Across the school, pupils apply such life skills as resourcefulness, reflection and resilience to their challenges. Their outstanding behaviour and relationships mean that no time is wasted and pupils work together enthusiastically to meet their challenge.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is outstanding. They say they love school and demonstrate this with their excellent attendance. As one pupil wrote, 'I love the creative things and the laptops'. They say that 'everyone is friendly and helpful', especially to 'new people'. Pupils contribute a great deal to the caring ethos of the school and take pride in being buddies to the youngest children and being members of the school council. The school and the community it serves are still developing. Pupils have contributed to the local carnival and worked with the local public school on performances. The school is becoming a focal point for the community but acknowledges there is more to do. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy. Most belong to a school sports club and can talk at length as to what constitutes a healthy diet.

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	2
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	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	2

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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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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

All lessons observed had a number of strong features. Within a framework of excellent relationships, teachers manage pupils exceptionally well so that lessons move at a very brisk pace and no time is wasted. Pupils work very well independently whilst the teacher is working with a different group or in 'Challenge Time'. Planning for the wide ability range within each class is managed very effectively and based on precise assessment. Each pupil is well aware of their 'next step' targets and tries hard to achieve them. Highly proficient teaching assistants provide excellent, knowledgeable support for groups and individuals. Each pupil has the use of a laptop computer which teachers plan to ensure are used to maximum effect. Consequently, pupils' skills are very well-developed and they make excellent use of a range of software in their work. Daily 'Challenge Time' is planned exceptionally well and clearly inspires and motivates pupils to a high level.

The vibrant curriculum is enriched further by links with 'Creative Partnerships' an organisation which provides experts in fields such as drama, music and photography. These experts work alongside pupils, staff and parents to promote divergent and creative thinking. The imaginative and high quality art and photography displayed in the school demonstrates the positive impact of this partnership. Furthermore, innovative and inspirational ways to develop pupils' writing have been highly effective. The full programme of lunchtime and after-school clubs as well as the over-subscribed French breakfast club, adds considerably to pupils' enthusiasm and learning.

The school provides outstanding pastoral care for each pupil. This care is exemplified in the way that all adults work together to ensure that all pupils, regardless of any difficulties or disabilities, are able to take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. Pupils are known exceptionally well by all staff and any unhappiness or difficulty in learning quickly noted and appropriate strategies put in place.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of the headteacher's inspirational leadership is that staff work extremely effectively as a team and demonstrate a corporate desire to provide the best for all pupils and a willingness to pursue this. The determined vision and team effort of staff and governors has enabled a new building to become a school, which is, as one parent wrote, 'an outstanding success that is providing a solid foundation, not only for a child's future education but for the rest of their lives'.

Monitoring of teaching, learning and curriculum provision by the senior team is regular and rigorous. They have quickly spotted where changes need to be made or where good ideas can be profitably exploited. Links with parents and carers are excellent. Their views and pupils' views are taken into account in school development planning.

The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local developing community very effectively. It has good links with the nearby Felsted public school. It has evaluated its actions with the result, for example, that global links are to be developed further. Safeguarding procedures are robust, updated regularly and known by all.

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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children have an excellent start to their education. Parents speak highly of the welcoming provision and value the daily contact with staff and weekly news letters which help them know how their child is getting on and how they can help their child at

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home. The deputy headteacher leads and manages the provision very effectively because she has an excellent understanding of the learning needs of the age group. Consequently, teaching is outstanding. The areas of learning for these youngest children are carefully woven into exciting 'experiences' within the curriculum. Planning is individualised and based precisely on what a child knows, understands and needs to learn next. This enables children to make outstanding progress. Children at the early stages of learning to speak English, make rapid progress. Children's confidence and expertise in using the laptops for learning is outstanding. Basic literacy and numeracy skills are taught very effectively so that children are very well prepared for their move 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

Nearly every parent or carer of pupils at the school responded to the questionnaire which is a very high proportion. They were unanimous that overall, they are happy with their child's experience at school. A few parents also wrote letters to accompany the questionnaires, listing all that they value about the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fritch Green 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 92 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	82	89	10	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	84	14	15	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	75	22	24	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	77	21	23	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	76	83	16	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	77	20	22	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	78	85	14	15	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)	54	59	26	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	77	21	23	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	72	24	26	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	73	25	27	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	79	19	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	84	15	16	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 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.



31 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Flitch Green Primary School, Dunmow, CM6 3GG

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. Like you, I think it is a very exciting and friendly place to be and you get on very well together. My particular thanks to those of you who talked to me at lunchtimes and gave presentations of your club and creative agent activities. I found your presentations very interesting and what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to tell you what I found out.

This is an outstanding school. You told me that you enjoy school and I could see why, particularly when I saw you enjoying your 'Challenge Time' sessions and the displays of your exciting art work. You told me the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. I agree that teaching is excellent and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. I could see that you think hard about how well you have completed your work and try to reach the targets your teachers set for you. I noted that standards are above average this year and you are making good progress because teachers keep a very close eye on how well you are getting on.

Your headteacher, governors and senior teachers provide outstanding leadership. I have asked them to do one thing to make your school even better:

To make sure that, in mathematics, you have some interesting and exciting ways to practise skills and calculation methods you are unsure of.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are really positive about learning and I was very impressed with your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success. I hope your 'O2' concert experience is a success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

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