

The Ferncumbe CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125687
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	293331
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Bassett

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 on roll	105
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Ingall-Tombs
Headteacher	Christine Edmonds
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	The Green Hatton Warwick CV35 7EX
Telephone number	01926 484318
Fax number	01926 484318

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Situated in a small village near Warwick, the school draws most of its pupils from the village of Hatton and a nearby new housing development. The school is smaller than most but the number on roll is increasing and currently there are five classes. Children in the Foundation Stage, pupils in Year 1 and those in Year 2 are taught in three separate year group classes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 and those in Years 5 and 6 are taught in two mixed aged classes. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Taking the intake as a whole, the children's standards are broadly the same as most children when starting in the Reception Year. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 following a term when the school had an acting headteacher. There have been several staff changes since the beginning of the autumn term 2006. The school has recently received an Active Mark award to acknowledge the development of pupils' physical education.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is improving quickly under the very strong leadership and guidance of the headteacher. With the growing support of staff, governors and parents, the headteacher has instigated a robust programme of new developments based upon a thorough evaluation of how well the school is doing. Some of the initiatives have not been in place long enough to raise standards throughout the school but good improvements in teaching, curriculum provision and pupils' personal development are clearly evident. With good overall leadership and management the school is progressing well and weaknesses in its organisation have already been speedily resolved. The staff and governors have very positive attitudes towards the shared vision for the school's development and have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve achievement and to raise standards. The capacity for further improvement is good. Most parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the changes being made and as several parents put it, 'The school is improving week on week'. However, one or two parents express concern about the number of changes being made.

Improvements were needed to be made because pupils were not doing as well as they should. Standards overall, and especially in English and science, had fallen over the past three years. Last year, test results showed that standards overall at the end of Year 6 were slightly below average and the more able pupils did not do as well as they should. In science, standards were below average and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. However, improved teaching and determined efforts by the leadership and management have now eradicated this underachievement. Currently, achievement of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is now satisfactory and standards are average overall, although in science more able pupils do not do as well as they should.

Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory, with aspects of good teaching in most classes. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the skills and understanding expected for their age. Good provision made in this class ensures that they make satisfactory progress overall with several children making particularly good improvements. The recent good teaching in Year 6, together with effective measures to support pupils with learning difficulties, has enabled pupils to quicken their progress and to make up for previously lost opportunities. Teaching overall is generally no better than satisfactory because teachers are still not extending the skills and understanding of the more able pupils. Assessment tracking records are being established but have not been in place for long enough to enable teachers to use them to plan tasks for the full range of pupils' abilities or to enable them to help pupils understand how they can improve.

The school is in a good position to move forward because many aspects of its work are good. The school's self-evaluation of its work is good. The curriculum is well planned and contributes effectively to the pupils' good personal development and well-being. All pupils are fully involved in all that the school does. The care, support and guidance given to pupils are satisfactory overall, with the pastoral care being strong and often excellent. This is well reflected in the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is also enhanced through the good links with a school in Sierra Leone.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science by setting more challenging tasks to develop investigational skills and understanding, especially for the more able pupils.

- Develop easily maintained assessment records that teachers can use to plan more precisely for the needs of everyone within each class.
- Ensure that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve standards and raise achievement. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underachievement will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Children's progress is satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage but with good provision several make good progress. Positive strides are made in their personal and emotional development. The school's results in the national tests for Year 2 last year show that pupils made satisfactory progress. Standards were average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. In contrast, standards at the end of Year 6 were not so good and were slightly below average overall. Science standards were below average and progress was unsatisfactory. Although it was a very small cohort last year and comparison with the national performance is unreliable, the more able pupils in all three subjects did not do as well as they should. Teaching is improving in most classes and, currently, standards in these classes are rising. The continuous drop in standards experienced at the end of Year 6 over the past three years has been halted. Pupils in Year 6, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are now making more rapid progress. Standards in English and mathematics are currently average because the more able pupils are now doing better. Overall standards in science are still not good enough because too few pupils exceed the expected skills and understanding. Last year boys did not do as well as the girls but at the moment there is no significant difference between their relative achievements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils are attentive and well motivated and enjoy their work. Behaviour is good and these positive attitudes are reflected in the above average attendance.

Pupils are very aware of what they need to do to stay healthy. They are enthusiastic about the new tuck shop and know the importance of choosing healthy options, pointing out that they prefer wholemeal toast. Pupils adopt safe practices and are very careful when using tools such as scissors. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community and have a good sense of belonging to the Ferncumbe Family. They willingly take on various responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the school. They are developing their basic skills in literacy and numeracy satisfactorily to equip them for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features in most classes. This has resulted in satisfactory and improved progress and has halted the steady decline in standards in Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching is good and there is a clear understanding of what each child has achieved.

With consistently good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and particularly in Year 6, pupils' progress has accelerated more rapidly recently. The main reason teaching is satisfactory overall, rather than good, is because teachers do not use assessment records rigorously enough to plan a wide enough variation in the tasks they set to cater for the full range of abilities in their classes. The more able pupils are not challenged rigorously enough, especially in science, where their skills are not advanced enough to enable them to exceed the expected standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The balanced curriculum is managed effectively for the different year groups and has a good influence on pupils' progress. Good links with a school abroad enhance pupils' personal development effectively. Opportunities to link work to the local community and involvement with other schools make learning more interesting. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and a modern foreign language is being developed effectively. The arts, and especially drama through theatre links, are a strong focus across the school. Physical education is developing effectively in conjunction with the local secondary school. Pupils enjoy the good range of clubs and activities outside lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is often outstanding and all staff show good care and concern for each pupil's personal development and well-being. Support for different groups of pupils, such as the pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, is satisfactory. There are good links with support services that provide extra help for those who need it. The school gives due attention to health and safety matters, although some concerns about access to the school site still have to be addressed.

Assessment systems for checking pupils' progress are relatively new and these records are not yet fully embedded. Consequently, teachers are not yet able to draw upon comprehensive data to either plan the wide range of tasks needed for their pupils or to show pupils how they can improve. Booster groups are effective and are a strong feature of the school's support for pupils who find some learning difficult.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The deputy headteacher and senior staff give good support to the headteacher. All staff are very clear about what the school needs to do next to become more effective. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is determined to ensure that all pupils have the best possible opportunities for a good education. She has instigated vital improvements to the school in order to raise standards and these are now beginning to take effect. The school's performance is monitored and evaluated well by the headteacher and senior teachers. Strategies to improve teaching are rigorous and enable the staff to make substantial improvements to raise standards and pupils' achievements. This has had a good impact already and has stopped the decline in standards and achievement. The governing body is organised, supportive and committed. Governors are gaining knowledge about the school but occasionally do not act quickly enough to follow up important requests or concerns. Areas for improvement identified

at the last inspection have been addressed. The school provides satisfactory value for money and now has good capacity for further improvement in the future.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Ferncumbe C of E Primary School, Warwick, CV35 7EX

Thank you for making Mrs Boyle and me so welcome when we visited your school. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education and that it is improving rapidly and already does some things well. These are the things that are particularly good.

- Your headteacher leads and manages your school very well. She has clear ideas about the future developments and has brought about many improvements.
- The progress most of you make is satisfactory, and standards of your work in English and mathematics are average. Pupils in Year 6 are making a big effort and their work is now improving quickly.
- You are all developing good attitudes towards your work and towards each other. You know a lot about keeping safe and you understand how to remain healthy.
- You are polite and you behave well.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in some classes; your teachers are improving their teaching and also developing the subjects to make your learning more enjoyable.
- The staff and governors have a very positive attitude towards the developments that are happening in the school.

There are still some ways in which your school could be better. We have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- help your teachers to improve standards in science by setting more challenging tasks to develop your skills and understanding, especially for those of you who learn quickly
- develop better records that show what you can do, so that your teachers can plan a wider range of tasks within each class so that you all learn as well as you can
- ensure that you are aware of what you need to do to improve standards and raise achievement.

Once again, thank you for your help.

Mr Graeme Bassett Lead inspector