

# Fen Ditton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110605
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325180
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Speakman

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	146
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Julie Deane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Elizabeth Bassett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Horningsea Road Fen Ditton Cambridgeshire CB5 8SZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 292342
<b>Fax number</b>	01223 294790

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- attainment on entry in the light of a changing pupil profile
- achievement of current Year 6 pupils
- effectiveness of recent developments in tracking pupils' progress
- the impact of the most recent leadership and management initiatives on provision and standards.

Inspectors gathered evidence from observations of lessons and pupils' work, parental questionnaires, school self-evaluation documents and discussions with the headteacher, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It serves the villages of Fen Ditton and Horningsea. About two thirds of the pupils come from out of district, with most of these coming from areas that experience high levels of disadvantage. Children start their Early Years Foundation Stage education at the beginning of the Reception Year. Attainment on entry is below that normally expected for children of this age. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater than in other schools, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The main identified needs include moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. The number of pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than most schools and a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The school runs a breakfast club before school each day. All but one class teacher, including the headteacher, are new to the school since the previous inspection. The school gained the Activemark in 2008 recognising the quality of provision for physical activity.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Fen Ditton Primary is a good school in which pupils achieve well and reach satisfactory standards from a low starting point. It takes exceptional care of all pupils, provides an excellent curriculum and these together promote pupils' outstanding personal development.

Test results at the end of Year 6 fell in 2008 and were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, the headteacher identified past erratic progress for a significant number of these pupils and when this is combined with the low starting point of many, they made satisfactory progress over the key stage. This was a one-off situation and good academic achievement is the norm in this school. Current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are back on track to reach at least broadly average standards, showing good achievement. However, assessment data shows that although achievement is good overall, it is still only satisfactory in writing. The school is aware of this and is developing effective strategies to raise standards, including the very close monitoring of individual pupil's progress against their targets. A particular strength is the provision and resulting levels of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils have good skills and use these well to support learning in other subjects and to enrich their learning experiences. A large number of pupils, including younger ones, show good skills in producing animations, in exploring simulations to develop thinking skills and in helping produce the school's web site. Good progress in developing basic skills, good ICT skills and the ability to work alongside others effectively, prepare pupils well for the next steps in their education and life beyond school.

Good teaching and an excellent curriculum support pupils' good achievement. There is however, some variation in the quality of teaching. Inspection findings match the school's own observations that teaching varies from outstanding to satisfactory. This also matches with different rates of progress as pupils move through the school. The school has identified an improving profile of teaching in lesson observations, with most teaching being good or outstanding in the most recent round of observations. Although teachers match work exceptionally well to the wide range of ability in classes to make sure all have appropriate learning opportunities, variation in the quality of teaching and learning means that equality of opportunity to learning is good rather than outstanding. Teachers are now using the information from the newly implemented systems to track individual academic achievement more effectively, but the marking of work is not always specific enough in letting pupils know how they can improve.

One of the reasons pupils enjoy school so much is they find lessons interesting. Learning tasks, which often involve pupils in practical activities such as drama, fully engage their interest and enthusiasm. The curriculum is excellent with ICT having a strong and effective place in the curriculum. There is a great emphasis on developing pupils' problem solving across a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science and ICT. Since the headteacher arrived, the place of music in the school has been raised significantly. Individual and group musical achievement is celebrated and there are many opportunities for pupils to share music with the rest of the school and the local community. Provision for physical activity is equally strong. High quality personal, social and health education (PSHE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent personal development. Curriculum enrichment is excellent. An exciting and extensive range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities adds greatly to pupils' interest.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Behaviour is consistently at least good and often exemplary. This is particularly so when teaching is at its strongest and pupils' interest and enthusiasm are captured. Pupils and parents confirm that learners' enjoyment in school is very strong. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and the few who take more time off school than most, have valid reasons for doing so. Pupils are confident that they learn and play in a very safe environment. They are well supervised at all times and look after each other at break times for example, through acting as playground buddies. Actions like this contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is excellent. The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles is excellent. They know all about healthy diets and the importance of keeping active; putting their knowledge and understanding fully into practice.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school, local and wider communities. This reflects excellence in the way the school promotes community cohesion. There are many ways in which pupils serve the school, from the school council, to organising and running charity functions and one pupil winning a photography competition to become the school's official photographer. They grow vegetables in the school garden and sell them to raise some funds to help the school and to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of difference and diversity, and pupils with specific needs and those from overseas are fully included and welcomed. 'It's good to be different because then you've got things to talk about.' remarked one pupil. They have a strong understanding of global issues through their work on sustainability and through using world events as stimulus points for discussion, drama and writing. Typical of this was the theme of 'Earthquake in Mexico,' through which they built empathy for the plight of others. They have regular communication, via email, with children in a school in India, building a balanced view of what it is like to be a child in another country. The school reaches out to the parent community, providing classes to raise their awareness of how their children learn and how to manage children's behaviour effectively. Governors make an excellent contribution to the leadership and management of the school, providing high levels of support and challenge and taking a lead role in important areas of school improvement. They and the headteacher are fully involved in with the Parish Council on their travel plan to encourage cycling. Governors are at the heart of the school community and together with the staff they have 'a collective responsibility to work for a common purpose.' As there has virtually been a complete change in the staff since the previous inspection, governors have played a pivotal role in helping the new staff gel into a strong team, capable of moving the school forward. With the headteacher, governors have worked hard and successfully at building exceptionally strong links with professional services and other schools to strengthen learners' well-being and enhance opportunities to learn for all groups of pupils.

Since the headteacher took her post almost two years ago, there has been significant development in important areas of the school's provision. Leadership and management are good. An initial evaluation identified key areas that needed improvement in order to halt the one-year fall in achievement. Based on accurate and effective self-evaluation the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors formed an exceptionally clear vision for the future of the school. This was very effective in re-establishing good achievement. There have been other important improvements made under the current leadership; new systems have been introduced to monitor pupils' progress regularly; class teachers now discuss pupils' individual progress with the headteacher each term and are held accountable for the academic progress of their pupils; teachers use practical approaches to learning, which pupils enjoy very much. Targets are set at a challenging level, and contribute well to good achievement, but the headteacher rightly has

the view that the consistency in meeting them is not quite there yet. However, the track record of moving the school forward at a good pace indicates that the school has a good capacity for continued improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children make an excellent start to their education in this outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents' views on this provision are very positive. From a low and sometimes very low starting point, particularly in speech and language and in their social skills, children make at least good and often excellent progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is of a high quality and learning is based on an exceptionally good range of activities, consistent with the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills, including development of early reading and writing. Children have plenty of opportunities to choose or plan activities whilst working very well alongside adults. Resources are excellent, with role play areas such as a flower shop and currently 'Bob the Builder's' shed, which attract boys and girls equally. The only weakness of any significance is the lack of a canopied area, which means that the outdoor area cannot be used in all weathers. Plans to provide the cover are in place and set to go ahead in the near future. Children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well, often helping children to reach personal, social and emotional development levels above those expected for children of this age. Children become very confident and enthusiastic learners. Leadership and management by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, working closely with the headteacher, are excellent and very effective management of available staff ensures excellent adult teamwork.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop strategies to raise achievement in pupils' writing further in order to raise standards.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good so that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fen Ditton Primary School, Fen Ditton, CB5 8SZ

Thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We appreciated you helping us find out about your school, especially those of you who gave up time to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and your teachers and visiting lessons to watch you work. It was interesting to speak to you to find out what you think about the school and how you contribute to making it a pleasant place to be.

You go to a good school and those of you we spoke to speak highly of your time there. All the staff work well together to provide you with a good quality education. Teaching is good and the curriculum and the quality of care shown for you, excellent. Most of you make good progress in lessons and reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

You help a great deal by behaving exceptionally well and trying hard to do your best. We were impressed by how well you respond to your teachers and are willing to try hard. We liked the sensible way in which you make friends with others and care about each other. You help to make others feel very safe in school. Those of you we spoke to said how much you enjoy school and find it interesting. You are well prepared for the next stage of your education.

To make things even better, we are asking the staff and governors to:

- Help you improve your writing skills further.
- Make sure that all teaching is consistently good or better so that you all make good progress as you move through the school.

I hope you will all help make the school become even better by continuing to cooperate with your teachers.

I wish you all the best in the future.

David Speakman

Lead inspector