

Fingringhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115139
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326132
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	John Paull

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Kimmance
Headteacher	Mrs Julia Longman
Date of previous school inspection	3 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Fingringhoe Colchester Essex CO5 7BN
Telephone number	01206 729266
Fax number	01206 729266

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Inspection number	326132

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This school is much smaller than most and serves the village and surrounding area. Nearly all pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds. Very few have a minority ethnic heritage and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion who are known to be entitled to free school meals is much lower than average. While attainment on entry varies from year to year and often covers a wide range in each year group, it is typical of children nationally overall. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fingringhoe Primary is a good school where pupils achieve well. Its strong links with parents and outside agencies effectively support its provision. Parents' questionnaires indicate high levels of support, which pupils' own comments endorse. A typical comment from a parent states, 'All the staff work very hard to produce a varied and balanced curriculum that my children enjoy and the headteacher is dedicated and always approachable'. A pupil said, 'Everyone is friendly and we all help each other to get on and learn and that's great'.

Current progress, including that of pupils who find learning difficult, is good. The headteacher's strong leadership, supported by an excellent governing body and a knowledgeable, effective and hard-working staff, has brought about many improvements since the last inspection. As a result, a number of features are outstanding. For example, outstanding care, guidance and support, linked to a good curriculum, are leading to excellence in pupils' personal development and well-being. Good teaching, including a particular strength in the management of pupils, both in the classrooms and around the building, is contributing to excellent behaviour. Excellent pastoral care shines through all that the school does, matching its ethos. This contributes much to pupils' feelings of well-being. They express great confidence in their teachers whenever asked, so they feel safe, which greatly enhances their enjoyment of school and nearly all attend well. It also means that pupils with particular difficulties, including emotional and behavioural issues, are nurtured extremely effectively. As a result, they settle quickly when they join the school, often from a situation where they did not experience success. They progress well and often make up much of the ground that they had lost. Cross-curricular themes contain good opportunities for pupils to acquire much knowledge about healthy lifestyles and to take part in physical activities that promote their fitness.

Standards fluctuate from one year to the next. However, this is largely the effect of low numbers in each year group, such that the test results of only one or two pupils have considerable statistical impact on overall percentages. Currently standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. In the 2008 tests for pupils in Year 6, results in English appeared higher than in mathematics and science. Nevertheless, the headteacher's accurate analysis identified something of a conundrum. A very high proportion of pupils had exceeded normally expected levels in reading, somewhat distorting the result and concealing a relative weakness in writing. A drive to improve pupils' writing is now proving effective and writing standards have improved to above average. Work in pupils' books shows how teachers' marking focuses on what pupils should do next to improve. Pupils' vocabulary, punctuation and flexibility of sentence construction are thereby progressing effectively. Assessments of work at the end of Year 2 indicate that pupils achieve well and that standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching assistants provide strong guidance to pupils, working effectively alongside teachers to support those with different needs and learning requirements. A good policy to support pupils who are more able is in place. This is also proving effective as there are more pupils working at and achieving levels higher than normally expected than in the recent past.

Leaders, managers and governors are exceptionally accurate in their evaluations of the school's present and underlying provision and its impact on achievement. A good example is seen in a recent decision to alter and refurbish part of the school's remarkably attractive, but not always ideal accommodation. The aim is to improve the progress children are making by increasing the opportunities available for them to work and play outside across all required areas of

learning. Continual careful analysis of performance produces ongoing adaptation of targets and resources. Linked to strong staff teamwork, this means that leadership and direction at all levels is effective and the capacity to sustain improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

A good balance exists between activities that children initiate themselves and those decided by the adults. This ensures that children are interested in what they do and as a result, they learn well. Good links with parents ensure that children have a settled start when they first enter the Reception class. The good quality of teaching enables children to make good progress. Sessions about letter sounds, other language skills and number work are balanced effectively with the other areas of learning, keeping children happy and well motivated. The adults keep up a constant flow of conversation with children, addressing their language requirements and developing their vocabulary. Most children reach the levels expected of them by the time they enter Year 1, although there are year on year variations because of the small numbers involved. These good outcomes occur despite accommodation that does not always permit learning outdoors across all areas of learning, thus restricting choices for those who would usually learn better in such an environment. The staff work extremely hard to overcome this difficulty and planning is well under way to rectify it. Pupils' welfare is promoted exceptionally well, ensuring their safety and contributing much to their enjoyment of school and contributing to their excellent personal development. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour so that any inappropriate lack of attention is soon checked and behaviour is of a high standard.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the focus on writing, so achievement rises even further.
- Proceed with improvements in provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage as quickly as planning and funding permit.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Progress through the school is good, because teaching and learning are good. Pupils achieve well compared with their starting points. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Senior staff have identified that able pupils were not always achieving as well as they could. Steps taken to rectify this are proving effective, with increasing numbers of pupils working at higher levels than normally expected, as they advance through the school. The gap between pupils' performances in reading and writing is closing because of the focus the school has had on improving their writing skills. Pupils with learning difficulties often do very well in the school's nurturing, inclusive climate. They achieve very well and make rapid progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result, they treat each other and adults with great respect but remain very willing to speak sensibly about anything that they disagree with, or that could be improved. Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils show much interest in their own and other cultures and religions. Standards of art and singing are good, as seen in displays of work and in rehearsals of the 'Fingringhoe School Musical', which pupils

in Year 6 devised themselves. They are also very willing to foster links with pupils in France and India, and to raise funds for charities at home and abroad. Added to this, their contributions to the smooth operation of the school are many. For example, they carry out routine jobs most conscientiously. They are effective in bringing possible improvements to provision to the attention of the staff in their school council meetings and individually. Pupils work and play together amicably, often in groups that mix well to mutual benefit across gender and age. When asked, nearly all of them said that they enjoy school and attendance is good. They say that they feel safe in school and that it helps them to understand about healthy living. Pupils have strong social, literacy and numeracy skills, which hold them in good stead for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is of good quality and some aspects are outstanding. Characteristically, lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers direct specific questions to individual pupils particularly well. Work and planning are adapted well to meet the needs of individuals of different ages and abilities in each class. As a result, learning is good, so progress is currently nearly always at faster than normally expected rates. The staff have themselves identified the need to develop the use of marking, so it contains more detail about what pupils should learn next. This is already growing in its effectiveness. In an outstanding lesson, for example, it was this feature that set the teaching apart. Time was set aside for pupils to read and absorb recommendations made in the marking of their last piece of work. Teaching emphasised how pupils might use this opportunity effectively, encouraging them to make an immediate response in their next task. Progress was remarkable and emerging work was well beyond the standard normally expected across all abilities and ages in the class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

What is taught includes all the main subjects required, enriched with extra opportunities to learn French and to take up the violin or clarinet. The curriculum is adapted effectively to meet different needs, including those of pupils with learning difficulties. Opportunities to acquire skills in personal, social, health and citizenship education promote pupils' personal development very well. Good planning ensures a good progression of skills that reduces to a minimum any risks of repetition in the mixed-age classes. Senior and subject leaders have successfully introduced a focus on increasing the amount of investigative work in mathematics and science. This is starting to show a positive impact on rates of pupils' progress in these subjects. Enhancements are seen in the provision of a wide range of after-school clubs, including sports, run by teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as visitors from outside agencies.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

An outstandingly strong climate of care and support is evident. Teaching and non-teaching staff alike always make time to listen to pupils and to help those who express concerns about anything. As a result, the school has a highly successful record in guiding pupils who have experienced difficulties in other settings. This includes pupils with learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and some with issues related to attendance. Such pupils often go

on to make rapid progress and thereby catch up on what they missed. Governors and senior staff ensure that all statutory requirements for safeguarding and protecting pupils are met. Staff throughout the school know pupils' individual needs very well and work unstintingly to meet them. Academic guidance is thorough and used very effectively to set targets and to establish what each individual needs to do next to progress well. This is one important reason why pupils' progress is continuing to accelerate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Changes in the leadership team temporarily slowed the school's development. This has now been reversed effectively. The headteacher's clarity of purpose, leadership and strong direction, supported by the whole staff, is showing its impact in improvements in the quality of teaching and rapidly increasing achievement amongst all groups of pupils. Realistic, yet challenging targets for pupils' progress have been established.

The governing body provides excellent leadership and management through sensitive support, which thoroughly understands the school's present stage of development. This allows governors to probe and question highly effectively at a strategic level and contributes to remarkable accuracy in the school's self-evaluations. Governors also contribute much to outstandingly well researched and fully justified decisions.

Everyone involved in the school works exceedingly hard to eradicate any possibility of discrimination that might affect pupils either personally or academically. The school's recognition of its responsibility to promote community cohesion is seen as paramount. A recent audit of the school's approach indicates that the whole staff are remarkably active in ensuring that pupils understand that everyone has responsibilities to national and global communities as well as locally. During a conversation with the inspector, older pupils explained that by recycling things locally, for example, they were helping to prevent global warming and that this would help people in France and India. The curriculum contains many opportunities to see people in other places positively, while showing pupils that looking after their own community also protects livelihoods across the world.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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**

24 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fingringhoe Church of England Primary School, Fingringhoe, CO5 7BN

Thank you for being so helpful when I inspected your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed the time with you, looking at your work and visiting your lessons. I also enjoyed talking to you and especially the working lunch with your school councillors. I agree with them that you all attend a good school, where the adults look after you with lots of kindness and care. I was very impressed with your behaviour, and it was lovely to hear so many of you say how much you enjoy school.

Here are some more important things that are good about your school.

- Nearly all of you make good progress in lessons and achieve well.
- Many of you are reaching above average standards in your work.
- Your school provides many opportunities that you take up extremely well to be part of the community.
- You are learning how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors get on well with your parents, which is helping you to learn.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors also have good ideas for making your school even better.

Here are two things that your school's governors, senior leaders and I have agreed will make it even better.

- To carry on with helping you to improve your writing, so your skills and standards rise even more.
- To go ahead with their plans for changing the building, so the youngest children have more chances for learning, especially outdoors.

You can help by keeping up your own good efforts in writing and continuing to read and act on all the helpful comments that your teachers make when they mark your work. I hope that you will always enjoy your days at school as much as you do at Fingringhoe.

Yours faithfully,

John W. Paull

Lead inspector