

Foulsham Primary School

High Street, Foulsham, Dereham, NR20 5RT

Inspection dates

16–17 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Foulsham is an improving school that fully meets its aim to take, 'little steps to great achievements.'
- One pupil said, 'Our new head has changed a lot and made it really good.'
- Pupils generally make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and those need extra help with their work, generally do well because they receive very effective support.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they have positive relationships with staff who know each pupil individually.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well and say that they feel safe in school.
- Staff work closely as a team and share ideas effectively.
- Excellent links with the preschool and local secondary school ensure that the transfer to and from Foulsham is smooth.
- The headteacher, staff and governors strive for ways to secure the best outcomes possible for all pupils.
- The headteacher and governors have brought about very good improvements to teaching and pupils' achievements since the last inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some lessons are not planned with enough detail to ensure that work is always closely matched to the needs of individuals and groups.
- Pupils are not given regular opportunities to form opinions of how well they are doing and play a full part in their own improvement, including assessing their own and each other's work.
- Leaders do not consistently check the quality of teaching in order to further improve its quality.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons. All were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, other staff, governors, parents, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 29 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also spoke to a number of parents and viewed the school's own parent survey. The responses to six staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's own information on pupils' progress; planning and monitoring documentation; the school's view of its own performance; the records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from pupil premium is spent; records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the extra government funding for children looked after by the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed forces) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in four classes, three of which are mixed-aged. Reception children are taught as a class. Years 1 and 2 are taught together, as are Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- The school operates an 'early bird' club which meets daily before school, but does not provide breakfast.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality teaching to support good or outstanding teaching by:
 - clearly defining and communicating to pupils the learning objectives and the success criteria by which they will be measured
 - consistently matching tasks to the different needs of groups and individual pupils.
 - involving pupils more regularly in assessing their own and each other's progress
- Ensure all members of the leadership team use similar criteria to assess teaching and learning and that points for improvement are followed up during the next lesson observation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with a wide range of skills and experiences, but overall they are broadly typical for their age. They settle quickly because of excellent links with the village preschool and the small number in their class, so they have extra adult attention and help.
- Information shows that, since 2011 when standards were low, they have risen in 2012 and 2013 at an increasingly rapid rate and pupils make good progress through the school. Progress is particularly strong in Years 3 to 4 and accelerates further in Years 5 to 6.
- This year, four in every five Year 6 pupils reached the expected level in both English and mathematics. In mathematics, half the pupils went on to reach a higher level, and in English four in every ten did so.
- Year 2 pupils did well and about nine in every ten reached or exceeded the expected level. Four in ten went on to reach a higher level in reading and three in ten in mathematics, but this fell to only one in ten in writing. This is largely because tasks do not sufficiently develop the most able.
- The school places much emphasis on reading. The refurbished library invites pupils to read. In the national screening of Year 1 pupils to check their understanding of how to link letters to the sounds they make (phonics), pupils did better than average in 2012 but scored lower in 2013. The school recognised this and took immediate action so currently pupils are doing better.
- Mathematics standards are much improved since the last inspection, largely because in 2012 the school appointed a teacher with excellent knowledge and understanding to lead the subject.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are given the extra help and support, in class lessons or in small groups focused on particular subjects.
- The small proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make similar progress overall to their peers. Funds are spent on extra resources and staff, and making sure these pupils do not miss out on visits. In 2012 there were too few pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding to comment on their attainment.
- Basic skills are good because they are regularly practised in other subjects. Life skills are taught well, such as when Years 5 and 6 practised 'how to work in an organised way.'

The quality of teaching

is good

- Questioning is used effectively to get pupils to think through problems or clarify their thoughts. Pupils are particularly attentive when teachers ask individual pupils questions rather than just letting those with their hands up answer.
- Progress is particularly good in Years 3 to 6 because tasks here are very closely matched to pupils' different levels, and are neither too easy nor too hard. Often, even the types of questions asked vary so the level of challenge for individual is just right. However in other years this matching is not done as effectively and pupils' progress is not as strong.

- Lesson planning is inconsistent. At its best, such as in Years 3 and 4, lessons are planned meticulously so everyone is clear of the lesson's focus and how it will be achieved. Just before pupils start an activity, the teacher here asks, 'What do you think I'm going to be looking for when I mark your work?' The discussion that follows means everyone knows what is expected. However in other classes the teachers do not always make clear to pupils what they will learn during the lesson.
- Pupils learn rapidly when they are active in their learning. For example, pupils often clarify or extend their thinking by sharing their ideas with the person they sit next to.
- Older pupils respond particularly well when their teacher puts tasks they do into future context. When he says, for example, 'Knowing about this will be important because...' they realise the relevance to later life and concentrate better. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils have positive relationships with staff so that lessons run smoothly. On the rare occasion this is not so, it can simply be because staff have not sufficiently planned for pupils' different needs in all parts of the lesson.
- When marking pupils' work, teachers give clear comments so pupils know what has been done well and where they need to focus next. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. However, pupils are not systematically taught how to assess their own learning, so that they can play an active role in their own improvement.
- Teaching assistants know the pupils they support well. They know how to motivate and encourage them so that they learn effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Fundamental to the success of the school is how well each individual pupil is known by staff, so that they can tailor support to meet everyone's needs. One parent explained her child's rapid progress, 'Her teacher really knows how to get the best out of her.'
- The 'early bird' club has grown to be very popular, and is very social and harmonious time when pupils can practice a range of skills.
- Pupils are very considerate of one another. They recognise each other's particular needs, and make allowances for them so that individuals can do well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and even the youngest want to challenge themselves. One such pupil, during problem-solving, asked his teacher, 'Can I have a really, really hard one?' They have a good awareness of how to be successful in lessons. When asked, 'How did you do that?' one Year 2 girl replied, 'Because I concentrated hard.'
- Pupils say, and most parents agree, that they feel safe in school. Pupils have a good awareness of their own safety, including e-safety.
- Nearly all pupils behave well. Pupils say that one of the first and most important changes the headteacher made was to make clear to everyone how they were expected to behave. Parents agree. Even so, a very small number of pupils struggle to manage their own behaviour,

particularly when teaching is less effective.

- Pupils understand the different types of bullying and feel confident staff would handle any cases effectively. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.
- Pupils feel they have a real voice in the school, and that staff listen to them. They are asked, for example, about their views of the subjects they study, and how they are taught.
- Attendance is above average because the school has done much to improve it since the last inspection. Incentives for the whole class and individual pupils motivate them. The school has correctly tightened procedures such as those for term-time holidays. Punctuality is good, too.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is focused on providing high quality education. Improvements have been rapid because school leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Information is used regularly and effectively to check the progress pupils make. If pupils are falling behind, extra support is put in place, and then checked to see it is working, and changed again if not.
- School leaders respond to any concern very quickly. Because of relatively poor results, phonics teaching has been re-organised and training for all staff implemented.
- Subject leadership is good. Staff responsible for English and mathematics offer expertise and check teaching and learning in all classes. The regular monitoring of teaching is an improvement since the last inspection. However, there is no consistent, shared understanding of what good teaching and learning looks like, and improvement points are not always followed up at the next observation.
- Pupils enthusiastically describe the subjects they study as 'fun' and 'interesting.' They like the different topics they learn and visits they go on and as a result pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The majority of parents are more positive about the school than at the last inspection. Parents say they particularly like the informal but regular opportunities to walk around the school, look at displays and their children's work, and talk to staff.
- Partnerships with other schools are strong. Relationships are particularly good with the preschool and high school, and this is beneficial to pupils because movement in and out of the school is smooth.
- Both headteacher and governors speak very highly of the excellent support received from the local authority. Whether guiding governors or training staff, it has been highly effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly focused and very motivated and much improved since the last inspection. They bring a range of expertise to the school which is enhanced by regular

training. They fully meet statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding. They know staff have clear targets for improvement and check that these linked to arrangements to promote staff and increase pay. Governors know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance in teaching. Through searching questions, they generally have a good understanding of information about the school, whether this is information about pupil progress or finances, including how the pupil premium is spent.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	120807
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	405964

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	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Howell
Headteacher	Jenny Dowden
Date of previous school inspection	July 2011
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