

Cavalry Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110674
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	337544
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Joy Richardson

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jo Mills
Headteacher	Mrs Val Spriggs
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons and saw 16 teachers teach. They had discussions with governors and with staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation about the school's policies and pupils' progress. They received questionnaire responses from staff and pupils, and analysed 133 parental questionnaires.

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

- the pace of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics
- how the staff help pupils who are falling behind to catch up
- the impact of recent initiatives to improve learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how the school evaluates what it does well and what it could do better.

Information about the school

The school serves the Fenland town of March. Since the last inspection, a children's centre has opened on the site, including a nursery that is managed by the school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage; around ten per cent come from a variety of other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen since the time of the last inspection and is greater than that in the majority of schools. A very few pupils are at an early stage in learning English.

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

The school is outstanding because of the high quality of education it provides, and its exceptional care for the well-being of every child. The school carefully evaluates its work and knows that it does many things well, but it is cautious in the judgements it makes about itself because it seeks to do even better.

Children make a flying start in Nursery and Reception, because of exceptional provision that opens a world of learning for them. Pupils' learning and progress are good throughout the school. Some pupils make outstanding progress because of the school's persistence in overcoming the barriers to learning that many pupils experience. Results vary between year groups, but most pupils reach the level expected nationally by the time they leave. Pupils often make excellent progress in reading because they are enthused and challenged to read widely. Pupils write with lively enjoyment and are confident in working with numbers, though some require stronger reinforcement of basic skills in these areas to speed their progress. Pupils are highly skilled in information and communication technology (ICT), and the standards achieved in music and art are exceptional.

The school offers pupils an extremely rich education that extends well beyond the classroom. Pupils' horizons are broadened and they are encouraged to aim high. Teaching is consistently good and frequently inspirational, sparking excitement in learning as pupils find what they are capable of doing. Teaching is well planned and fosters good learning habits, though pupils are not always challenged enough to be accurate in their recall of spellings and number facts and to remedy errors in their work. The quality of care for individuals is outstanding and the school is persistent and imaginative in finding ways to meet pupils' needs.

Pupils take a great pride in the school and relish responsibility. They absorb the values of kindness and consideration that run through school life, and their behaviour is exemplary. The school makes excellent arrangements to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. It works extremely well with parents, carers and other partners to give pupils the best possible support.

The school is led with vision and ambition. It has excellent capacity to continue to improve because leaders are tenacious in securing improvements and thinking about how to raise standards further. Governors provide exceptional support in guiding the school's development. Across the school, teamwork is extremely strong. Staff, pupils, governors and parents and carers share in the delight of belonging and contributing to a community where pupils so evidently flourish.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, ensure that teaching consistently reinforces basic skills and remedies errors, and that pupils are challenged to be accurate in their recall of spellings and number facts.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils achieve well during their time in school and most, including those who have difficulties in learning, are successful in meeting the targets set for them. Pupils greatly enjoy their learning and grow in confidence that they can succeed. They become good learners and their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils apply themselves to the task in hand and work at a good pace. They gain valuable skills in investigating and solving problems and learning is set in context, as when pupils worked out the probability of different teams winning the World Cup. They work effectively with others, learning to contribute their own ideas and to think how their work can be improved, for example, commenting thoughtfully on each other's art work. Pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills, and those who join with little English rapidly gain fluency.

Pupils have wide knowledge about how to keep safe, including when using the internet. They strive to be healthy. They make healthy choices about what they eat and gain great enjoyment from growing vegetables in the school's gardens. They appreciate the importance of exercise, participating in a wide range of sports and playing energetically at lunchtime. Many walk or cycle to school. Pupils are keen to contribute to the community and take pleasure in doing jobs around the school and taking care of younger pupils in the playground. The school council plays an active role, for example, in choosing play equipment and ensuring that it is used sensibly. Pupils take the initiative in organising events to raise money for those in need.

Pupils' all-round personal development is extremely good. They gain excellent social skills and learn how to work and play harmoniously. They contribute to making the rules and they help each other to keep them. They appreciate the wonders of nature, greatly enjoying the natural environment of the school. They develop wide horizons in learning about other people and places. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils are well aware of the skills required for success in later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils succeed because of the good quality teaching they receive. Teaching is lively and imaginative. It is carefully planned to bring learning to life for pupils through practical activities and the use of technology. Staff are skilled in explaining, checking pupils' understanding, and encouraging pupils to put their own ideas into words. Assessment is used to excellent effect. This leads to a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning and provides targets for pupils to work towards. Reading skills are taught thoroughly. However, teaching does not always pay enough attention to accurate recall of spellings and number facts to support pupils' progress.

The school's curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of memorable experiences. The school is rich in music and many pupils seize the opportunity to learn an instrument and to participate and perform in junior and senior bands and the choirs. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs, from engineering and chess to needlework and drama. They participate in sports teams and are often successful in tournaments. Educational visits provide many new experiences and visitors bring the wider world into school. The breakfast club gives pupils a healthy and enjoyable start to the day.

The school is exceptional in the quality of its care and support for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Teaching groups are carefully organised to provide extra support or extended challenge as required. Teaching assistants are highly effective in working as part of the team to help pupils make progress. The staff know pupils extremely well as individuals and have a deep understanding of their needs. The school is quick to recognise the difficulties that some pupils face and works flexibly with pupils and families to help overcome them. It is

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relentless in working to improve attendance so that pupils have every chance to succeed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is extremely well led and managed by the headteacher and the senior management team. They constantly evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and are quick to identify how it could be better, so that the quality of teaching is continuing to improve. Information from assessment is analysed closely to check the pace of each pupil's progress and to take action as needed. Teaching methods are thoughtfully reviewed and adapted where any weaknesses are detected. For example, the approach to teaching mathematical calculations has been recently revised to make learning easier for pupils. Staff and resources are skilfully deployed to achieve maximum impact on learning. Morale is high amongst the whole staff team because of a shared commitment to doing the best for pupils.

Governors know the school extremely well and are thorough and committed in their oversight of its work. They engage effectively with the whole school community. They share a clear vision for the school and bring determination and expertise to their role. Partnerships with other schools and agencies are extremely strong. The school is highly effective in the robust arrangements it makes for safeguarding pupils. Concern for pupils' safety and well-being permeates the whole of school life, as seen in the school's attention to detail in caring for pupils with medical needs.

The school is outstanding in its commitment to ensuring that each pupil has every opportunity to succeed. Those from different backgrounds are equally valued, and newcomers are welcomed so that they quickly feel they belong. The school has excellent relationships with parents, carers and families so that they are better able to help their children learn. The school understands and supports its local community extremely well and has forged effective links with schools in other countries to extend extending pupils' global awareness.

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

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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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children start in Nursery or Reception with skills that are less well developed than usual at this age, particularly in speech and language and social development. Children make good and sometimes excellent progress. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most are close to reaching the Early Learning Goals set nationally for this age. They are beginning to read and write and they know how to link sounds and letters. Children are interested and independent in their play, showing imagination, curiosity and concentration. They listen well, speak confidently in a group and cooperate happily with adults and with each other.

The Nursery and Reception areas offer a treasure trove of activities that captivate children and make learning interesting and exciting. The whole environment, indoors and out, is skilfully and imaginatively organised to lead children's learning forward, giving them many opportunities to challenge themselves and to practise new skills. The staff are sensitively tuned to the needs of children and have an excellent understanding of how children learn. The staff work together seamlessly in each area. Children settle quickly and feel safe and secure with clear routines, while also enjoying the freedom to explore. Parents and carers are welcomed. Excellent relationships ensure that they are able to share any concerns with staff and seek their guidance. Close liaison with the children's centre, and a current project to support children and families, are having a very positive impact in smoothing transition into school life.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well to extend children's learning and to ensure their health and safety and well-being. Children's progress in learning is carefully assessed and recorded, with close attention to the needs of each child and the next steps in their learning.

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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

A very large majority of parents and carers are highly satisfied and inspectors consider this faith in the school to be well justified. Unfortunately parents and carers received a questionnaire that did not contain question 8, but during the inspection, inspectors looked very closely at this area of work and are pleased to report that pupils are very well prepared for the future. Parents and carers comment that children feel safe and are cared for extremely well. They appreciate the high quality of leadership and teaching. Parents and carers welcome the support that the school gives them in helping their children to learn. A few parents and carers have concerns about how unacceptable behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors judge that pupils' behaviour is excellent and managed extremely effectively by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cavalry 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	65	44	33	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	63	47	35	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	73	55	54	41	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	56	54	41	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	78	59	54	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	53	59	44	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	44	70	53	5	4	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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	50	60	45	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	44	60	45	9	7	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	44	59	44	8	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	83	62	45	34	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	65	43	32	1	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



17 June 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Cavalry Primary School, March, PE15 9EQ

We greatly enjoyed visiting you recently. Now I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school and the education it gives you. You are extremely lucky to go to such an outstanding school.

The staff make sure that there are always interesting things to do in lessons, in clubs and when you go on visits, and in the playground too. It was good to hear the school so full of music. We are glad that so many of you learn instruments and perform in the bands and choirs. We saw some wonderful art, and you are very skilled at using computers.

Your behaviour is excellent, and we noticed how you remind each other about how to behave. You are good at making new children feel welcome too.

The staff understand that some of you find it easy to learn and some of you find it harder. They are very good at helping each one of you to improve your work and to get better at learning. You do very well in reading.

You are good at writing and mathematics too, but some of you could make even more progress and we have been talking with your teachers about this. You can help by taking care with learning and remembering spellings and mathematics facts, so that you always have them ready when you need them.

Everyone seems to enjoy coming to your school and you are quite right to be very proud of it.

Yours sincerely

Joy Richardson

Lead inspector

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