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Classroom modernisation gives pupils a new outlook on learning

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Looking out of the windows of Filby Primary in Norfolk, the children used to see only sky. Margaret Baker, the head, said: "The windows in the Victorian building were so high, I could hardly see out, let alone a four-year-old. Now we have floor-to-ceiling windows."

The importance of daylight is one aspect considered in a report from the Primary Review this week. Researchers have found that pupils' exposure to natural light is linked to improved performance.

Filby's new buildings opened earlier this month after the 47 pupils were taught for a year in four mobile classrooms while they waited for the school to be modernised.

The Victorian facade remains, but the school now has a hall, a head's office, a third classroom, an ICT room/library, separate toilets for the youngest children, and access to the playground from all classrooms. It has pupils up to Year 4, but will be expanding to take Years 5 and 6.

Ofsted visited during the transition, and praised Mrs Baker for ensuring her pupils' education didn't suffer. "The children are thrilled to have a sports hall," she said.

As a small school, with two year groups in each class, there is no scope to set pupils. But Mrs Baker said that for some topics, such as maths, pupils were more likely to be grouped academically than by year, so those very good at maths may be taught with children in a higher age group.

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