

# St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	110435
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	385391
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January–1 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jane Wotherspoon HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	328
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Elizabeth King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Tagg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 March 2010
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Farnham Royal Slough SL2 3AW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01753 644471
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<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:headteacher@farnhamroyal.bucks.sch.uk">headteacher@farnhamroyal.bucks.sch.uk</a>

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	31 January–1 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	358391



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jane Wotherspoon

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Marsh

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at short notice and was the fifth monitoring inspection since the school went into special measures. Inspectors observed 24 parts of lessons which included short observations of phonics teaching and observed all teachers who were present during the inspection. Meetings were held with staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including hearing some pupils read, and looked at a range of documentation including self-evaluation documents, analysis of performance data, action plans, and the governing body and interim executive board minutes.

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. However, an inspector spoke informally with parents and carers at the start of the second day of the inspection and took account of the views of parents and carers gathered in the school's recent survey.

## Information about the school

St Mary's is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around average. Approximately 40% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining 60% of pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and cultural backgrounds; of these, the largest group is of Pakistani heritage. Around a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language, with a small number at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is below average. The school has not met government floor standards for attainment and progress.

The school was inspected in March 2010 and judged to require special measures. It has been monitored termly since October 2010. During this time, it has undergone significant staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2010, and relied on temporary supply staff. The local authority removed the powers of the governing body and replaced it with an interim executive board to provide challenge and support for the school. A new governing body has been constituted and resumed governance of the school, with full delegated powers, from January 2012.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

In accordance with Section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

- The school has improved significantly since its previous inspection and is now a satisfactory school. Pupils, and their parents and carers, recognise the improvements that have been made and acknowledge that pupils are learning more now. Indeed, the vast majority of pupils make satisfactory progress and an increasing proportion make good progress to make up the ground that they lost while the school was failing them and teaching was inadequate. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in English and low in mathematics but the gap is narrowing.
- Strong leadership, initially from the headteacher and increasingly from other senior leaders, ensures that all staff and pupils are in no doubt about the high expectations of them. A rigorous focus on checking the quality of teaching and learning and on helping teachers to improve through training and support has had a positive impact. Staff morale is high and there is a strong commitment to continue improving.
- Teaching is satisfactory but typically stronger in English and mathematics where the school has placed most of its focus. Teachers are not consistently using the skills they have developed when they teach lessons in other subjects to ensure that the level of challenge for pupils is always as high as possible.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Just occasionally, behaviour slips when teaching is not so inspiring and pupils are sometimes passive learners. The school is a harmonious community where pupils from all faiths and cultural backgrounds get on well together.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers plan to raise the challenge for pupils, especially the most able, through:
  - providing open-ended tasks in a range of subjects
  - asking more probing questions that deepen and extend pupils' understanding
  - checking that pupils respond to teachers' marking and feedback.
- Develop the links between subjects to provide greater opportunities for pupils to apply reading, writing and mathematics skills within a wider and more creative curriculum.
- Strengthen the teaching of phonics to ensure that a whole-school approach is adopted that is implemented consistently and supports older pupils who have missed important skills in the past.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Historically, standards have been low by the end of Year 6. However, there are signs of improvement over time. In Key Stage 1, standards are rising so that pupils' attainment is broadly average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Attainment in Years 3 and 4 is, similarly, as expected for pupils' ages. The low attainment in mathematics evident in Years 5 and 6 is a remnant of the past. Here, for example, pupils do not always have quick recall of key number facts or mental strategies for making efficient calculations. Attainment in reading by the time pupils leave the school is in line with expectations. Currently, progress is satisfactory; many pupils are making good and accelerated progress to narrow the gap between what is achieved at this school and what is achieved nationally.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. As standards have begun to rise across the board, the school has accurately identified that there is scope to ensure greater challenge for those capable of attaining higher standards. Differences in the achievement of boys and girls is similar to that seen nationally and the school is addressing some of these differences with, for example, training for staff on raising boys' achievement and different resources such as library books that will interest boys. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of their peers, as is that of pupils learning English as an additional language. Some pupils at the early stages of learning English make rapid gains in speaking, reading and writing.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making satisfactory gains. Many start school in either the Nursery or Reception Years with fewer skills and

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experiences than expected for their age. Their language skills are often especially low. Much work has been done to improve the environment, resources and learning experiences for these youngest children. In particular, opportunities for children to initiate and engage in role-play activities that develop their vocabulary and increased opportunities for writing and mark-making are having a positive impact on developing essential language skills. The school is aware that there is more to do to improve the activities provided in the outdoor area.

Parents and carers who spoke with inspectors said they have noticed their younger children learning things that their older children did not learn. Phonics - the knowledge of letters and the sounds they make - is an example. Pupils in the Reception classes and Key Stage 1 are learning letter names and sounds at a satisfactory pace that helps them to work out unfamiliar words when they are reading and to spell simple words in their writing. Many pupils in Key Stage 2, who have not experienced this systematic approach, lack the strategies they need to read and write quickly and efficiently. So, even though the quality of pupils' writing is improving because of the school's focus on teaching the features of language and giving pupils a range of opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences, their work is marred with spelling and grammatical errors. The pace of pupils' writing is sometimes slowed by a lack of confidence in spelling the words they want to use. The school has identified the need to ensure a consistent approach to teaching phonics that extends into Key Stage 2 for those who need to develop such skills.

### **Quality of teaching**

When planning lessons, teachers give much thought to how they will modify activities for pupils of different abilities, although this is not always totally successful. Teachers often modify plans as a result of pupils' responses in the previous lesson, but make fewer changes during a lesson to deal with misconceptions. Teachers do not question pupils sufficiently to challenge and extend their learning, particularly for those pupils who have the potential to achieve more. So, for example, teachers accept answers too readily without challenging pupils to add more detail or justification. At times, teachers have a predetermined answer in mind and so miss opportunities to explore other avenues when pupils do not provide the answer they expect.

In the main, teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and they are not disappointed. The best lessons proceed at a good pace with well-motivated pupils engaged by teachers' enthusiasm. Several successful strategies are used consistently to help pupils engage in their learning and to keep them actively involved: group work and paired work enable pupils to check answers with their peers before speaking aloud; and self-assessment against the criteria set out for the lesson helps pupils to identify whether or not they have achieved what was expected of them. Teachers' marking has improved significantly and is consistently thorough and regular. Pupils do not always get the most benefit from teachers' comments, however, because they are not given time to respond to them.

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Planning for subjects other than English, mathematics, and information and communication technology does not always use strategies and resources to inspire curiosity and provide open-ended opportunities for creativity. Teachers are increasing planning links between subjects with themed weeks, and events, such as 'Roman day', provide interesting opportunities for learning. At present, teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to practise using literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum, particularly opportunities for extended pieces of writing. Nor are pupils expected to sustain the quality of their work between subjects.

Teaching assistants are generally well deployed and provide effective support for groups of pupils in lessons. Intervention programmes for pupils with specific learning needs are better organised than in the past and have a positive impact on enabling pupils to achieve as well as their peers. An example is the 'talking partners' intervention for groups of pupils learning English as an additional language. Here, pupils learn to share their ideas, take turns and develop a wider vocabulary.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they respond well in lessons. They are attentive even when teaching is not stimulating. The youngest children, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are lively and interested in the activities on offer and learn to share and take turns. They develop positive relationships that stand them in good stead as they move through the school. Pupils are kind and supportive of one another and polite and courteous to adults. They develop a secure understanding of right and wrong. Activities in the curriculum teach pupils how to keep themselves safe with events such as 'anti-bullying week' raising their awareness of different forms of bullying. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare and incidents of racist behaviour practically unheard of, although they are sure that any incidents will be dealt with effectively. The school's records of incidents confirm that pupils' views are accurate. Pupils feel safe in this school but also express the view that learning is sometimes disrupted by others in lessons. The school's questionnaire of pupils' views shows that they like school and feel cared for by teachers. There was strong agreement that pupils of all faiths and beliefs get on well with each other. Overall, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is above average, although the attendance of some groups of pupils is not as good as it should be.

**Leadership and management**

The headteacher and, increasingly, other leaders set clear direction for the school's improvement. There is a strong sense of teamwork and of all staff pulling together. The school has developed a culture of self-reflection, openness and honesty. There is a passion and tangible commitment to improve further and to make things even better for pupils. The capacity to make that aspiration a reality is demonstrated in the way that leaders have steered the school successfully through its journey out of special measures. The new governing body has been moulded by a strong interim executive board and members are already demonstrating an ability to challenge the school and hold it to account by asking the right questions. The safety and well-

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being of pupils is paramount and governors meet statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils.

Accurate self-evaluation helps to identify the next steps for the school's development. It is backed up by rigorous monitoring of the quality of provision through observing lessons and sophisticated analysis of performance data. Regular and constructive monitoring of the quality of teaching, alongside training and support for staff's professional development, has had a good impact on improving aspects of teaching. For example, teachers are better at meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Overall teaching has improved from inadequate to satisfactory with some that is good but some that still needs improvement. Teachers are reflective and keen to improve their practice.

Detailed analysis of pupils' performance data is used successfully by leaders to check that all groups of pupils are achieving as well as they can and ensures that leaders can intervene quickly if any individual or group appears to be falling behind. Increasingly, teachers analyse the data to identify what they must do to raise the attainment of groups and individuals in their class. Termly meetings to discuss the progress of each pupil are a powerful tool for senior leaders to hold teachers accountable for pupils' achievement.

Through setting consistent expectations of parents and carers, the school has raised attendance and is seeking ways to engage them further in their children's learning and in decision making. Pupils told inspectors that staff help them to make decisions in the school. For example, they helped to devise the school's mission statement and gave their views on school through a questionnaire. They have regular opportunities to reflect on the beliefs and values represented in the school's community and respond positively to the themes and messages of assemblies. Teachers give pupils satisfactory opportunities to reflect on their own learning and on the consequences of their actions. Staff have begun to review the curriculum and to make links between subjects but acknowledge that the broader curriculum has not been a high priority until recently. The school's focus has, rightly, been on English and mathematics to raise standards and there has been less focus on taking opportunities for pupils to practise using literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**

2 February 2012

Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Primary School, Slough SL2 3AW**

I enjoyed meeting you again when I visited the school with my colleague. Each time I have visited, I have noticed some improvements. This was my fifth visit and we have judged that the school is now satisfactory. This means I will not visit you again.

Everyone has worked hard to improve the school and we were pleased to see that you are now making better progress and learning more. You were able to talk to us about your targets and about how teachers help you to learn. We saw how well teachers mark your books but we think you need more time to respond to their comments so that you improve your work even more. Your teachers told me that they are trying to find interesting ways of presenting different activities to you. We have asked them to make sure they always challenge you, especially those of you who are capable of achieving more, and give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing and maths skills in other subjects. We saw that your writing has improved when you use VCOP and FLAP but we noticed that your writing is not always as good in other subjects. The younger pupils are learning all about letters and the sounds they make (phonics) which help them to read and write but some of you older pupils have not had the chance to learn in that way and sometimes struggle with your spelling. Your teachers will teach you strategies that will help you.

Some of you told us that other things have improved and that you are more involved in making decisions. We saw your ideas about the mission statement and the school's values that are in the hall. You were confident that there is little bullying and that everyone gets on well with each other; we saw that for ourselves when we came onto the playground. However, you were less sure that behaviour is good and told us that sometimes lessons are disturbed by some pupils not behaving as well as they should. We saw a little bit of that kind of behaviour but not much.

The headteacher, staff and governors know what needs to be done to continue improving the school. We know you have played your part in helping the school to improve and urge you to keep coming to school regularly and to keep working hard. I wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely  
Jane Wotherspoon  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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