

Falkland Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109871
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	378001
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2012
Lead inspector	Andrew Saunders

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	428
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barrie Prentice
Headteacher	Fiona Henderson
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
School address	Andover Road Newbury RG14 6NU
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	7–8 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders

Additional inspector

Sandra Woodman

Additional inspector

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Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 16 teachers, including sessions to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Observations totalled 12 hours. Members of the inspection team met with groups of pupils, teachers and governors, and spoke to parents and carers informally. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's documents for self-evaluation, systems to track the progress of pupils, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching, minutes from meetings and the 211 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school and located in an urban area of Newbury. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few pupils from a range of other heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. These pupils have a range of needs, including moderate and complex learning needs, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum disorder. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Reception classes. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Among the many awards the school has achieved are the Healthy School award and the International School award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The clear vision of the headteacher and her senior leaders, coupled with accurate self-evaluation, has meant that improvements have continued to be made since the previous inspection. Leaders have an accurate view of the areas for development and have demonstrated their capacity to sustain improvements through their impact on improving teaching, particularly of writing across the school.
- Good teaching has enabled pupils to make good progress and maintain above average levels of attainment. This is because teachers use the effective systems to track pupils' progress and to plan carefully for their learning needs, so that tasks challenge pupils of all abilities.
- In the best lessons teachers ask probing questions to identify where pupils need further support or explanation and they adapt the tasks accordingly. However, this is not consistent in all classes. The use of 'success ladders' means that pupils are involved in accurately evaluating the work they have done. Effective verbal feedback gives them confidence about what they need to do next.
- Occasionally the work in mathematics is not as engaging for girls and their progress slows because they do not have the confidence to challenge themselves.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported because their needs are clearly identified, appropriate strategies are implemented, and the impact of these analysed. As a result, they make good progress.
- While the teaching of how to link sounds and letters (phonics) leads to confident readers and supports pupils writing well by the end of Year 6, it is not taught consistently across all classes and this means that progress in English is uneven.
- Behaviour is good; pupils show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy the topics they study. They like being at school and as a consequence their attendance is above average.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics by January 2013, to even out inconsistencies during Key Stage 2, especially for girls, by developing greater independence and confidence in tackling a range of mathematical challenges.
- Raise the proportion of good or better teaching by January 2013, by:
 - sharing the best practice in asking probing questions and adapting plans accordingly
 - improving the consistency of teaching phonics.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In the majority of lessons observed, pupils made good progress because the work they were given to do took account of what they already knew. Pupils join the school in Reception with skills and knowledge at similar levels to children of their age although their skills in reading and writing are not as well developed. They make a good start at developing confidence as learners during the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the good resources and teaching provided.

Pupils continue to progress well through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is above average. Some pupils reach levels of attainment beyond those measured by the national tests and the school ensures that these more-able pupils have opportunities to undertake more challenging work. However, in mathematics the progress of girls is uneven at times because they are not always determined and independent in striving to do challenging work, particularly when it involves bringing together a range of their skills to solve problems. Where boys have previously not performed as well as girls in writing, they now make similar progress to girls because the school has tackled this issue rigorously. Teachers provide topics that engage boys as much as girls and have adapted the approach to writing, for example by giving opportunities for extended pieces of writing within realistic contexts. In addition, the development of pupils' independence by giving them the responsibility of choosing what genre to adopt supports their good progress. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average; by the time they leave school pupils are very confident readers and attaining high standards.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because the adults who support them provide timely and accurate help, while ensuring these pupils develop as much independence as possible. Pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly develop great confidence in speaking English, which then helps their writing. As a result, they make at least good progress. Other groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, also achieve as well as their peers. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire

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agreed that their children are making good progress and are helped to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils themselves were very clear how much success ladders, and targets they agree with the teachers, help them. Whatever their ability, these ensure pupils know how well they are doing and what they particularly need to work on next.

Quality of teaching

To bring lessons alive, teachers use their good subject knowledge and the well-planned curriculum based around interesting themes. They have high expectations of pupils. In the best lessons teachers use a wide range of strategies to involve all pupils at every stage. Occasionally teachers spend too long explaining activities and this gives pupils less time to do the tasks. Assessment has been a key focus for the school and is consistently good across the school. This means that the information the school has about individuals and groups of pupils is accurate and helps teachers to plan the next steps in their learning effectively.

During lessons, teachers keep checking how well pupils understand what they need to do, and they adapt their explanations accordingly. Pupils reflect on the work they have done and regularly help each other to identify 'stars and a wish', the good features of a piece and something they could do even better. These opportunities to reflect, alongside the thought-provoking topics chosen, mean that teachers promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. The comments teachers make in pupils' books are usually well focused on the next steps of learning, although occasionally pupils' lack of responses mean opportunities are missed to consolidate progress.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers provide a wide range of resources, focused around the ideas and interests of the children. They make good use of the outdoor area, although opportunities to develop skills with numbers are not as strong as other areas of learning. The school follows a systematic approach to teaching phonics. However, this is not always delivered consistently or as effectively as in the best sessions seen, which constrains the progress of some pupils at times.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all pupils behave well at all times; they are polite and courteous around school and respect each other and adults in lessons. Behaviour during lessons, discussion with pupils and school records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. The few pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are supported by well-informed and trained adults who help them to understand the consequences of their actions.

A small minority of parents and carers felt that lessons can be disrupted by poor behaviour. Inspectors found that this may reflect a very few incidents, but that the school has robust systems to deal with these appropriately as soon as they occur. They have developed strong partnerships to help the pupils involved to change their

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behaviour. Pupils themselves were very positive that behaviour has improved and is good for almost all pupils; they showed understanding for those who find this more difficult.

Pupils reflect the high expectations of the staff, and want to do well. They particularly like working as part of a team, or giving each other feedback on their work and take this responsibility seriously. They also appreciate the many clubs, activities, visits and visitors which help make school an enjoyable place to learn. The residential trips are a highlight for the pupils, which they eagerly anticipate. Their positive attitudes towards school and towards achieving well are demonstrated in their above-average attendance.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are aware of different forms that bullying might take, including cyber-bullying, but say that it seldom happens in their school. If it does, they know what they should do and feel that there is always someone they can speak to, and that it would be sorted out. Pupils with complex learning needs or physical disabilities are helped to play a full part in the school because of the emphasis on equality. Pupils take great pride in the achievements of all members of the community.

Leadership and management

Together with other senior leaders, the headteacher has evaluated each aspect of the school's work and accurately identified key areas for improvement. These are addressed through carefully considered development plans, which are shared widely and reviewed regularly to ensure they make a difference. The incisive analysis of data available means that the school is clear about the progress pupils are making and quickly picks up on any groups whose progress may falter. Effective action is then put in place. The curricular focus on topics that engage the pupils works well. Pupils develop their creativity and imagination in their learning logs, often doing considerable work in their own time. Communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills are developed well across the curriculum.

Changes to the leadership and to staffing have been managed well because they have focused on ensuring all pupils get the best possible opportunities to succeed. There is an increasing emphasis on opportunities to share best practice, for example by observing colleagues teaching. However this is at an early stage and has not yet shown the full benefit in the consistency of teaching across all classes. Members of the governing body know the school well and work alongside the headteacher to provide insight and support to implement improvements. They bring a good range of skills to their role. Along with leaders at all levels, governors ensure that arrangements for safeguarding are robust. Together with the accurate self-evaluation by the school and demonstrable improvements since the previous inspection, this means that the school has good capacity to bring about further improvements.

A few parents and carers do not feel positive about some of the changes that have been made, and a few feel that they are not always kept well informed. Inspectors

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found that changes have been carefully focused on ensuring pupils make the best possible progress, whatever their starting points. They noted that while the school provides a wide range of ways in which parents and carers can discuss any concerns with the school, not all parents and carers are aware of all of these.

Imaginative use of a range of strategies help pupils to think about spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, such as 'conscience alley' in Year 4. The school ensures pupils have opportunities to think about those from backgrounds different to their own or with different beliefs and pupils appreciate the importance of this. The focus on one of the school's values each week helps pupils to reflect on their own development and think of ways they can express these values. For example, some pupils decided to award certificates to other pupils they had spotted picking up litter. Leaders and managers at all levels take seriously their responsibility to promote equality and tackle discrimination. Consequently, pupils' attitudes towards those with physical disabilities and complex special educational needs are highly inclusive. Pupils' achieve well and the school is successful in narrowing any gaps that become apparent.

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).

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.



9 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Falkland Primary School, Newbury RG14 6NU

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and found that you were very polite and well behaved. Many of you told us how much you enjoy coming to school, and we could tell this was the case because of your above-average attendance – you can be very proud of this!

We have judged that yours is a good school. This means that there are many things that are done well. The headteacher and other leaders make sure that there are good systems to help teachers gather lots of information about how well you are doing. Teachers use this information to make sure that the tasks they give you to do are just hard enough for you.

Although we have found that it is a good school, the headteacher and other senior leaders are determined to improve it further. We have asked them to do the following.

- Increase how quickly some of the girls make progress in mathematics, by helping you work more on your own without relying on the teacher too much when tackling mathematical challenges.
- Make sure that even more of the teaching is good or better, by getting teachers to ask you more questions and then changing how they help you, and by making sure all the teachers use the same ideas when teaching the linking of letters and sounds.

You can help to make it an even better school by trying to do as much of your work without asking the teacher for help. Continue to enjoy your learning and helping to make your school such a wonderful place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders
Lead inspector

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