

Faringdon Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123060
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359353
Inspection dates	7–8 February 2011
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Cox
Headteacher	Heather Hambidge
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2011
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons led by 9 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of the governing body. A number of parents and carers were also asked for their views of the school. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school planning, assessment data, records of children's work, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and a number of policy documents. The team received 92 questionnaires from parents and carers and also evaluated those from school staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas:

- the degree to which the school is successful in boosting progress in writing, especially for girls and higher-attainers
- the accuracy of assessment, effectiveness of the tracking of progress and success of the use of assessment to support learning
- the effectiveness of the induction of new staff in order that the quality of provision is sustained
- the broadening of pupils' understanding of the lives of people from different backgrounds nationally and globally.

Information about the school

Faringdon Infant School is of average size. Most pupils come from White British families and nearly all speak English as their main language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than in schools of a similar size. Many of these pupils have some form of learning or behavioural, social and emotional difficulty.

The school is organised into one Nursery, three Reception, two Year 1 and three Year 2 classes. There is a privately run Early Years Foundation Stage setting on site which was inspected separately. Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of staff changes due to retirement and promotion. The expansion of the local population has also led to a significant increase in the size of the school. Six newly qualified teachers have joined the school during the last three years. The school has been awarded Healthy School and Eco School status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Faringdon Infant School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The numerous staff changes during the past three years have meant that senior leaders have not always been able to pursue fully every identified improvement priority. Their time has often been devoted to the induction and support of new staff. Work to complete this staff development programme continues. At present, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, although it is inconsistent, which is why it is not good overall. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and enables the children to make brisk progress. In Year 1, teaching is not as strong as elsewhere and the pupils do not achieve enough. Year 2 is well taught and the pupils progress rapidly. Thus, overall progress from children's starting points is also satisfactory. Attainment is average by the end of Year 2, although it is lower in writing compared with reading and mathematics. Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in writing, which is in part due to too much use of worksheets, not enough emphasis on the sounds of words to assist spelling and insufficient attention to handwriting in some parts of the school.

The school has appropriate systems to evaluate its own work and to set apt priorities. This includes the tracking of pupils' progress, which is now based on accurate assessment. Previously, there were some inaccuracies in assessment, but the school has used its well-developed partnerships with local schools to good advantage in making assessment reliable. The use of the information from assessment is satisfactory, although there remain some weaknesses in the match of work to pupils' individual needs. There is insufficient challenge for higher-attainers in Year 1, but in Year 2, the work is more taxing for them.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good and this is complemented by outstanding procedures to safeguard all children. The pupils feel very safe in school and parents and carers are virtually unanimous in saying the same. Behaviour is good. Most pupils behave very well all of the time, although when their work lacks challenge, a few do not always sustain this. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community. Senior leaders recognise that partnerships with people from different communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom and overseas are not yet developed fully. This is why the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory rather than good.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In some cases, this has been good and has resulted in improved teaching, for example in Year 2. In Year 1, however, work to strengthen provision is not yet complete. Senior and middle leaders have appropriate expectations for the quality of provision and pupils' progress. They are not yet sufficiently involved in the monitoring of these things or in helping to share the strengths of teaching across the school. However, well-considered plans are in place to widen their responsibilities so that they contribute more effectively to the drive for improvement and the achievement of even more challenging targets for the pupils. The

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headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked successfully together to keep morale high and ensure pupils' welfare is secure. There is satisfactory capacity to maintain improvement in the future, especially in pupils' progress.

Up to 40 % of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the match of work to pupils' abilities and needs, especially for the higher-attainers in writing, by:
 - checking that work set for different ability groups is sufficiently different in order to provide consistent levels of challenge
 - stressing the beginning and end sounds in words to assist younger pupils make better attempts at spelling
 - ensuring there are sufficient opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to write in detail
 - reducing the use of worksheets, particularly in Year 1 helping older pupils develop a neat, joined handwriting style.
- Strengthen senior and middle leaders' accountability for pupils' progress and attainment by:
 - expanding their monitoring and evaluation of the quality of provision
 - developing appropriate strategies for the sharing of the strengths of teaching and learning.
- Broaden pupils' understanding and celebration of the lives of people in other communities in the United Kingdom and overseas by:
 - building effective communication links between the pupils and those in other schools
 - ensuring appropriate opportunities for pupils to visit different communities and meet visitors from them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment in reading and mathematics is broadly average. The school has successful strategies to teach the fundamental skills of reading, although there is not always sufficient stress on the beginning and end sounds of words which sometimes results in incorrect pronunciation and weaknesses in spelling. There is a good focus on problem solving and investigation in mathematics. Pupils in a Year 1 class enjoyed the challenge of recognising numbers up to 10,000 and in representing these in place value equipment. This lesson was the most effective one observed in the year group.

The school has maintained its sensible priority to raise achievement in writing. This is bearing fruit, as shown in Year 2 books where the beginnings of quite expressive writing are evident. However, opportunities to write at length are much less developed elsewhere. In Year 1, the pupils are not challenged enough to go far beyond their good achievement whilst in the Reception Year. Some activities in Year 1 involve completion of worksheets in

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which colouring is more prominent than writing. This is not a weakness in other parts of the school. There has been good improvement to pupils' skills and knowledge in information and communication technology. Their use of computers is frequent and is helping pupils build the essential basic skills of English and mathematics. This includes some effective work to develop writing skills.

Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, although the opportunity to find out about other cultures and faiths is not as strong as it should be. The Healthy School status is underpinned by pupils' good awareness of healthy diets and physical fitness. The pupils sometimes chide others for not including a portion of vegetables in their school meal. They also know the value of the vegetables they grow in their garden. This is a two-fold appreciation. They realise the value of the 'five a day' guidance and learn the monetary value of the produce when they sell it to their willing customers. This helps develop good enterprise skills which assists their preparation for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

There are some outstanding features in the teaching and learning of children in the Nursery, Reception Year and in Year 2. The pace of work here is usually brisk, there is much enjoyment of learning and the pupils work productively and purposefully. Not all of these things are common enough in lessons elsewhere. There is a marked contrast between the joyful exuberance of children in the Reception Year as they role play

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paramedics treating emergency and routine health matters and the fussiness sometimes shown by pupils in less demanding lessons. The use of assessment to support learning in lessons is developing satisfactorily. There is a useful system of marking work in English books that shows pupils what has been achieved and where improvement is due. The school is now working to develop a system of similar quality in mathematics.

The satisfactory curriculum has some good qualities. Pupils' personal, social and health education is promoted well. There are some good out-of-school learning opportunities, such as the French club which is attended enthusiastically and regularly by a good number of pupils. The adoption of the 'Learning Challenge' initiative is helping pupils broaden and strengthen their skills and knowledge across the curriculum. Thus, work is already afoot to improve the level of challenge in the work set, although the impact of this has yet to work through to the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, particularly in writing. The key improvement point for the curriculum is its personalisation to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. This is emerging well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2, but is not yet consistently good in all parts of the school.

Partnerships with outside groups and agencies, plus the good home-school links, are the basis of the effective way in which the school supports potentially vulnerable children and those with barriers to learning. The school has a good reputation for its caring ethos, which is well deserved. Pupils are helped to achieve academically by the more rigorous assessment now in place and its appropriate use to support learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have appropriate ambitions for the success of the pupils. Targets for learning are becoming more challenging and increasingly used to plan work that meets the needs of the pupils. However, there remain inconsistencies, particularly between year groups, in how the targets are translated into suitable work to engage and enthuse the pupils. Members of the governing body share the same ambition and resolve as the staff to make improvement brisker. They are supportive and involved in the school's work and know its strengths and weaknesses. They do not yet analyse the data that show pupils' progress in sufficient depth, but are ready to take a greater role in probing the school's performance in this way.

Safeguarding of pupils is a conspicuous success of the school. All adults in school are extremely watchful, security is tight without being obtrusive and procedures to ensure pupils are safe are rooted in high-quality documentation that anticipates every risk and

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provides expert guidance for staff in any cause of concern. Because parents and carers are well involved in their children's work and welfare, safeguarding is steadfast.

The promotion of community cohesion is not yet fully covered by partnerships with groups representing other communities in the United Kingdom or overseas. Locally, the links are good. The school has audited its own community and knows the priorities it must pursue to bring improvement. These include greater frequency of visits to, and visitors from, other cultures and faiths.

At present, the promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory rather than good because of the inconsistencies in pupils' progress, especially amongst the higher-attainers. The school has successfully tackled the past inequalities in achievement of girls, who are now generally as successful as the boys. It has also ensured pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the progress expected of them. There is no tolerance of any form of discrimination. Indeed, the pupils play very happily together, whatever their backgrounds.

The school uses its resources appropriately to bring value for money. The expanding size of the school means that some of the accommodation is under pressure. Class sizes have increased, although this is not a major factor in the inconsistencies in the quality of provision and pupils' progress. The larger classes in Year 2 are well taught, for example.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage holds many of the strengths of the school. The children make good progress from their starting points in the Nursery, which are below the expected level, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Provision in the Nursery and Reception Year is a well-judged blend of adult-

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led and child-chosen activity. In one Reception class, a group of children benefited immensely from the support and guidance given by their teacher as they wrote about things they liked. Quite independently, they constructed sentences such as 'I like the dragon', which reflected their enthusiasm for the experiences gained in learning about the Chinese New Year. In this session, the teacher guided the children effectively in the accurate spacing of words and evenness of letter size.

In a few lessons, there is insufficient spoken emphasis by adults of word beginnings and endings, which affects the development initially of children's speaking and listening skills and later of accurate spelling. However, in other respects, children's communication skills are developed well. Nursery-age children enjoy making marks to represent writing and then learning how to form letters and words. They play happily together indoors and out, learning to make choices and to play or work independently. There is a rich curriculum in the phase which gives the children lots to talk about. They are inquisitive and ask many questions. One Reception-Year group asked 'What is the biggest number?', after counting and sequencing numbers to 25. There was much enjoyable speculation about the answer. 'One thousand and fifty five' was agreed to be the limit.

Children's welfare is promoted very effectively. All staff enjoy being with the children and the feeling is reciprocated. Any source of worry, tears or feeling unwell is dealt with sensitively and successfully. Leadership of the phase is effective in bringing good and enjoyable learning which is peppered with fun. Good improvement has been made to assessment and its use to help plan the vibrant curriculum found in the four Early Years Foundation Stage classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. There was overwhelming support for the school and its work, with hardly any concerns. In the written comments, there were a few parents and carers who wrote about the expanding size of the school and the pressure this placed on staff and the accommodation. Large class sizes were of particular concern. This was also noted by those parents and carers who spoke to inspectors. Inspectors judge that the school has managed its growth carefully. The general feeling of parents and carers is that the school enables their children to learn successfully, looks after them with great vigilance and that there is a warm, friendly welcome for all.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 256 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	73	25	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	66	31	34	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	45	48	52	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	46	50	44	45	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	64	33	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	57	39	42	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	71	27	29	0	0	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)	46	50	38	41	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	43	52	55	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	41	49	53	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	40	49	53	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	57	37	40	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	64	33	35	0	0	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



9 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Faringdon Infant School, Faringdon SN7 8AH

Thank you for being so friendly when we came to school recently. You showed us how well behaved you are and how much you enjoy your time in school. We have written a report about your school. In it we explain about how it helps you learn. These are the main things we write about.

- You make the expected progress in your work.
- You have lots of fun in your learning and do well in school in the Nursery and Reception Year.
- You play together happily and know how to keep each other safe and healthy.
- You are taught soundly.
- Your teachers look after you well and make sure you are very safe.
- Your headteacher and other staff are working together to make it a better school.

We have also written about three things that can be improved:

- You could be given harder work in some lessons to help you learn even more.
- Your teachers should spend more time checking that you have plenty of fun learning to do well in reading, mathematics and especially writing.
- Your school could help you learn much more about people who live a long way from Faringdon.

Because you are so helpful, we know you will help your teachers make these improvements. To start, you could write them a note about what you like best in your lessons and what you think is not as much fun. Make it your neatest work ever.

We hope you do well in your school work.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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