

Fawkham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118592
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358395
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Edwards

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Faye Parkin
Headteacher	Dorinda Perry
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors saw seven teaching staff while visiting nine lessons or parts of lessons. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, senior leaders, teaching staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, assessment and tracking information, minutes of governing body meetings, arrangements for safeguarding and pupils' work. Staff and pupil questionnaires were also scrutinised along with 57 completed by parents and carers.

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

- The progress pupils make in writing, particularly that of boys.
- Whether pupils make sufficient progress in science.
- How well teachers plan work for different groups of pupils.

Information about the school

Fawkham is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have mild learning difficulties, although a small number have more complex learning needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage caters for children in a single Reception class. The school has received a number of national awards including the International Schools' Award and was also shortlisted for The Royal Forestry Society Excellence in Forestry 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: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Fawkham provides an excellent education for its pupils. It has improved since the previous inspection but there has been no complacency. Consequently, the school now provides its pupils with an exciting curriculum that provides them with activities that have a strong sense of purpose and which encourage them to work hard. Pupils are very well looked after and pastoral support is strong. Pupils report that they feel extremely safe and, for their age, have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe outside school. Parents think highly of the school and the views of two parents reflect the views of many when commenting, 'Both my children are very happy at Fawkham and I feel they have benefited enormously from the teaching and care,' and, 'Staff have been supportive, understanding and influential in my children's emotional and educational needs'.

Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Reception class. The good range of activities and consistently good teaching ensure they are well prepared for further learning. The good teaching continues throughout the school, ensuring they make good progress and achieve well so that pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. The staff know pupils very well and their careful assessments ensure pupils are provided with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school generally and thoroughly enjoy school. Their enthusiasm for school is seen in their high levels of attendance and their desire to talk about their experiences.

Pupils achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is also good. Planning for different groups of pupils is good and pupils are now making consistently good progress. There are high expectations of pupils who do their best to ensure their teachers are not disappointed. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to allow pupils, particularly the most able, to take responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for the pupils to prepare themselves for the next stage of learning, for example, through growing and selling their own fruit and vegetables and undertaking an exercise with a local company to design a new type of medicine. A very wide range of visits, visitors and clubs add considerable enrichment to the curriculum.

The staff and governing body have a very clear picture of how well the school is doing. Decisive leadership by the headteacher has created a determination to improve the quality of provision further. The school uses data very well to check its performance and the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and targets are challenging, but achievable. The leadership has systematically improved pupils' work in both writing, including that of boys, and in science. These improvements, which have taken place alongside considerable improvements to the building and grounds, show the school has good capacity to sustain further improvement. The governing body

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promotes community cohesion well and the school's international links are providing pupils with a growing awareness of other cultures. However, it has yet to evaluate fully the effectiveness of its plan to extend pupils' understanding of people from other backgrounds in the United Kingdom.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress further by:
 - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - allowing pupils, particularly the more able, to move on to activities sooner and not always being required to listen to all of the teachers' introductions.
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to gain greater understanding of people from different cultures, religions and backgrounds in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science and they make good progress throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress as a result of the early identification of their needs and effective intervention strategies. There is no discernible difference between the progress made by boys compared with girls. Pupils' speaking skills develop very well and they are confident and very fluent readers. For example, prior to a visit to a Tudor house, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils expressed very clearly what they could learn about life in Tudor times through examining portraits from that era. Pupils' mathematical skills progress well; their mental arithmetic skills are very secure, the result of regular practice. A clear, structured approach to developing writing skills, enables pupils to become confident writers in a range of styles. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils demonstrated good poetry-writing skills whilst those in Years 5 and 6 produced very good pieces of work based on an animation of 'The Piano'. Pupils make very good use of computers to aid their learning in all subjects. Musical, creative and physical skills are also strong, providing pupils with confidence in a wide range of activities. Teachers occasionally miss the opportunity to allow pupils to find things out for themselves.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to talk about the many exciting activities they do, including taking part in the 'Pirates of Penzance' with the local operatic society. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to eat healthily and to take plenty of exercise and a high proportion participate in the many sporting activities on offer. Pupils are keen to take responsibility, undertaking a range of jobs around the school and with the local community. For example, council members presented the views on traffic difficulties outside the school to the local and district councils. Pupils take leading roles in village life; the children sing at the church, at Rochester Cathedral, at a local home for senior citizens and at Bluewater Shopping Centre. They develop a good awareness of different religions and cultures and the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' awareness of people from different backgrounds in this country.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good. Teachers work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. They are adept at using interactive whiteboards to make learning more interesting, for example, using them to show animation clips as a stimulus for pupils' writing. Teachers are particularly good at planning work that crosses subject boundaries, for example, pupils developed an appreciation of art and improved their writing skills while studying Tudor life. They plan work so that all pupils are challenged and supported effectively. Teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those who find concentrating and learning a little difficult. Occasionally, they provide some pupils with too much information, not giving them the chance to discover things for themselves. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good, providing pupils with a clear picture of what they need to do to improve.

The whole of the school environment is used to excellent effect to support learning. The recognition by the Royal Forestry Society is a reflection of how the school has developed its extensive woodland area to enable pupils to gain an awareness of woodland life. Their work in metal, which is in the process of being erected by sculptors, is providing them with a memorable permanent reminder of their time at school. Residential trips, regular visits and visitors add considerable interest to the outstanding curriculum. The school works closely with parents and a wide range of outside agencies to ensure the needs of all pupils are catered for. Transition arrangements both in and out of the school are

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exemplary. All pupils are very well known to the staff, they are provided with excellent support and are very well looked after. As a consequence of extremely high quality care, guidance and support, most aspects of pupils' personal development are outstanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 headteacher ensures that the school goes from strength to strength through the implementation of its clear improvement plan. Self-evaluation procedures are extremely robust and priorities for development arise effectively from this rigorous analysis. Priorities for staff training are closely linked to performance targets, where appropriate. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning effectively and is developing the capacity of senior staff new to their roles to strengthen this process further. Performance management of staff is fully implemented. Governors are regular visitors to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses. However, they rightly recognise the need to record their visits more formally so that they can better report back to the rest of the governing body. The school has successfully improved upon the good outcomes seen at the time of the previous inspection. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress has developed and been used to improve progress in the key subjects. The personalised information is used effectively to ensure all pupils have excellent equality of opportunity, which is also reflected in the comparable rates of progress made by all groups of pupils. Excellent attention is paid to ensuring all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.

The school has created a range of excellent partnerships. Strong links with a local special school, a school in the Gambia and business links, all add considerably to the pupils' experiences. Senior staff promote community cohesion well and this has culminated in the International Schools award. However, pupils' awareness of other backgrounds in this country is not as strong as other aspects and the school acknowledges the need to evaluate the impact of its community cohesion plan more fully. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were rigorous. There are careful checks on those adults who work in school and regular health and safety checks.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers are very happy with the start their children make in the Reception class and say are kept well informed about how their children are progressing. One parent commented that, 'communication was excellent'. Children usually enter the school with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected for their age. The good progress they make ensures that on entry to Year 1 their attainment is above average. Assessment procedures are good and provide staff and parents with a very clear picture of how the children are progressing. This enables them to provide learning activities that are closely tailored to individual needs. The record of their progress recorded in the children's profiles provides a clear picture of the consistently good progress in all areas of learning.

Children are confident learners and are keen to take part in the wide range of activities that are available. There is a good balance of teacher-directed and child-chosen activities. The staff use a variety of learning strategies to stimulate the children's enthusiasm. For example, when learning their letter sounds as part of the regular 'phonic' sessions, a range of games strongly motivates the children's learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for the children, helping them to settle quickly and supporting those who need extra help and guidance. The outside learning environment is used very effectively to provide different learning opportunities. Good leadership and management by the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and other staff provide opportunities for the children to work with pupils from Year 1, giving a strong foundation for future transition.

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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

There was a strong response to the Ofsted questionnaire, with 57 returned. Most parents and carers have very positive views of the school, almost all indicating their children enjoy school and that they are kept safe. A few expressed concerns concerning communication between school and home. Inspection evidence showed that the school's links and engagement with parents are good and the leadership is working hard to involve parents further in their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fawkham C of E 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	74	13	23	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	49	86	6	11	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	61	20	35	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	58	19	33	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	41	72	14	25	0	0	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	70	15	26	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	68	16	28	1	2	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)	33	58	17	30	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	61	18	32	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	61	18	32	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	47	21	37	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	61	19	33	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	70	15	26	1	2	1	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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 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.



22 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fawkham C of E Primary School, Longfield, DA3 8NA

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you work and play. We were very impressed with how hard you work, your enthusiasm and your excellent behaviour. You are very polite and we were very pleased to see how well you worked with, and supported, one another. You are keen to assume responsibility and take part in many activities in your school and the local community.

You are provided with an excellent education so that you reach academic standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Children in the Reception class are provided with a good start and make good progress. The teaching is good and this ensures that you make consistently good progress throughout the school. Those of you who find it difficult to concentrate or find learning a little difficult are given lots of guidance that helps you to do well. Occasionally, we think some of you could make even quicker progress if you were given the opportunity to take more responsibility for your own learning. We have also asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to find out things for yourselves.

The school provides you with an excellent range of activities and you have lots of visits and visitors that make your work really exciting. We know you thoroughly enjoyed being part of the 'Pirates of Penzance' and that you are proud of your contribution for the 'sculpture tree'. You have a very good understanding of the need to eat healthily and you are keen to take part in the many sporting activities on offer. You learn much about people from different backgrounds throughout the world although we have asked the school to consider what you learn about people from other backgrounds in the United Kingdom. The staff look after you exceptionally well and you know how to keep safe.

Those in charge of the school are leading the school very well and working hard to make it even better. You can help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards

Lead inspector

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