

Fernhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116240
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357920
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting 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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Pound
Headteacher	Caroline Welch
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
School address	Neville Duke Road Farnborough GU14 9BY
Telephone number	01276 31554
Fax number	01276 33154
Email address	caroline.welch@fernhill-pri.hants.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed sixteen lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, staff and governors, and spoke to parents and carers informally. They looked at pupils' work, the school's tracking of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, school policies and procedures, records for the monitoring of teaching and learning by school leaders, school development plans, minutes from meetings and the questionnaires received from 52 parents and carers, as well as responses from staff and pupils.

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

- The most recent results of national tests and teacher assessments, and what these indicate about the attainment of pupils at both key stages, and whether boys achieve as well as they should.
- The extent to which teaching is sufficiently effective in bringing about improvements in achievement, and teachers' use of assessments of how pupils are doing.
- The effectiveness of leaders at all levels in bringing about sustained improvements.

Information about the school

Fernhill Primary School is smaller than average. The proportion of girls and boys is particularly uneven in a few year groups. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. These pupils include: those with moderate learning difficulties; behavioural, emotional and social difficulties; and speech, language and communication needs. There are a very few pupils with a range of physical disabilities. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises the Reception class. The school has National Healthy School Status and has achieved the Activemark.

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

This is a satisfactory school. The headteacher and leadership team have been focused on improvements in mathematics and reading, and this has led to a steady upward trend in attainment. The rate of progress in these areas is satisfactory and improving quickly. There has been a recent drive to improve writing, but it is too soon to see the impact on attainment, particularly for boys. Pupils are not always provided with writing activities that are relevant to their experiences and understanding. Teaching is satisfactory and sharing of good practice is increasing, so that good planning and effective approaches are becoming more widespread. However, in a few lessons, pupils work at a slow pace because expectations are not high enough, particularly of those who are more able, and tasks lack ambition or purpose. The improvements already brought about in key areas such as reading and mathematics, accurate self-evaluation and the ongoing developments in writing mean that the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Teachers care a great deal about the pupils and put considerable effort into ensuring that they enjoy being part of the school and taking pride in their community. Strategies to support those who face the most significant difficulties in their lives are working well and these pupils are helped to overcome barriers to learning, such as communication difficulties. The school has developed good systems to improve attendance and this has risen, although there are still a few pupils who are persistent absentees, despite the school's best efforts to address this. The majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well supported through carefully considered interventions, so that many of them make good progress. However these strategies are not always consistently implemented which hampers the progress of a small minority of pupils. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, many children make good progress from their starting points which are below those expected for children of their age. The progress of those whose skills and knowledge are more advanced is satisfactory, because the resources and activities available do not always sufficiently stretch their abilities.

Training in safeguarding is well planned for all adults involved with the school. As a result of this, and the good care of adults, pupils say they feel particularly safe at school. A few parents and carers expressed concerns over the management of behaviour, specifically of a very few pupils who find it particularly difficult to follow the school's expectations. The school has made changes to tackle this, which are proving effective in ensuring that all pupils' learning is not affected by occasional inappropriate behaviour. Where this has been challenging to bring about, the inclusion support staff have made full use of the support available through other partners. Many parents and carers expressed very positive views about the school and particularly about the dedication and hard work of the staff. As one parent put it, 'This has been a great school for my child who has progressed so well, both academically and socially, thanks to the hard working and caring staff.' Many parents and carers indicated that their children thoroughly enjoy school and pupils agreed with this.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing particularly for boys, by July 2010, by:
 - providing more relevant and interesting activities for writing and a sense of urgency in completing work to a high standard
 - challenging more able pupils with work that is more difficult.
- Ensure that the strategies which have been put in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are implemented by all staff.
- Challenge higher attaining children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing the range of resources available to them
 - using teachers' observations and records of children's progress when planning lessons so that all children are given activities appropriate to their knowledge and understanding.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils say that they enjoy school, because the teachers try to make learning as fun as possible. As a result, most pupils behave well. A few pupils can be challenging in lessons, which slows their learning. Progress seen in lessons and pupils' exercise books demonstrate that, with average attainment, their achievement is satisfactory. In the best examples, they give each other feedback and respond to this by improving their work. Good systems to keep track how well pupils are doing are now embedded and mean that staff identify those pupils who need help to ensure they make the progress they should. Pupils are provided with challenging individual targets, for example in Year 6. These help pupils to know what they need to do next to improve and develop their work further. This does not happen consistently across the school and it does not often enough lead to work that is challenging for pupils who are more able. At times, pupils all do the same tasks, which means some pupils occasionally waste time doing things they can already do well.

The work of the school and the participation of the pupils in choosing to live healthy lifestyles have been recognised in achieving the Activemark, as well as National Healthy School Status. For example, most pupils participate in at least one of the many popular sports clubs after school and enjoy taking part in local tournaments. They have some opportunities to take on responsibilities and enjoy doing so. For example, the recently trained junior play leaders at break times and where older pupils help younger pupils at lunch time. The school provides good opportunities to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and pupils respond well to these, demonstrating good tolerance and understanding of each other's different skills, views and beliefs. They spoke enthusiastically of the recent multi-cultural week which was the focus of much of their work recently. This helped them to improve their understanding of the wider world, although less so about their own country.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	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?

Adults in the school make the welfare of the pupils a high priority. Their good knowledge of pupils as individuals and readiness to listen or help means that pupils feel well cared for. Pupils who face particularly difficult challenges in their lives are given every support to overcome any issues and the school actively seeks appropriate partners who can help these pupils further, for example by providing speech and language therapy. Teachers deliver lessons with confidence and make good use of interactive whiteboards to present work in an interesting way. In the best lessons, teachers made good use of their knowledge of pupils to adapt the tasks to individual needs and keep up a good pace of work. Understanding and experience of how to do this is being shared among staff, through training, peer observations and monitoring. While more able pupils work conscientiously they are not challenged often enough to the extent of their capabilities. The online learning environment is helping to make the curriculum and learning accessible to pupils at home and giving parents and carers increased opportunities to know what their children are doing. The use of information and communication technology is well planned and provides pupils with innovative opportunities to explore different tools to enhance their learning, for example through control technology. The curriculum has been developed to reflect the interests and needs of the local community and makes good use of a wide range of visits and visitors to provide pupils with a wider view of the world. For example, Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the written work they did as the result of a visiting mountaineer. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and other

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opportunities which pupils enjoy, and the school works well with other groups to provide taster sessions of things like taekwondo and cooking. While the curriculum supports the learning of most pupils, there are not yet well developed links between different subjects. For example, while pupils have opportunities to write other than in English lessons, expectations of the standard of writing are not in line with the level at which the pupils are capable. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills are limited, beyond mathematics lessons.

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?

The headteacher has developed a clear leadership structure which is now becoming more effective in bringing about sustained improvements. Together with middle leaders, the senior leadership team have accurately identified the main key issues and their actions have brought about sustained improvements in reading and mathematics. Actions to tackle writing are more recent. There has also been a successful focus on improving teaching so that more teaching is securely satisfactory and good features of lessons, such as the use of peer feedback between pupils and the use of targets, are becoming more common. Analysis of the data about pupils' attainment and progress has made the school aware that many boys do not achieve as well as the girls do, particularly in writing, and that more able pupils have not often enough been reaching their potential. Strategies introduced have gone some way to address these concerns although it is too early for the full impact to be evident. Concerns about any incidents of racial discrimination are dealt with quickly and robustly; as a result, pupils from different backgrounds get along amicably. Pupils have had good opportunities to experience aspects of other cultures, including through their active links with a school in Gambia. Their understanding of the lifestyles and beliefs of others within a multi-cultural United Kingdom is less well developed.

The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. They have been supportive of the headteacher and provide the school with helpful insight because they are well informed and contribute to strategic development. While they have regularly sought the views of parents and pupils, there is limited evidence about the impact this has had. The headteacher and governing body ensure that all policies and procedures for safeguarding are carefully considered and these fully met government requirements at the time of the inspection.

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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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Children join the Reception class with wide variety in their skills and knowledge; for many these are below those expected for their age. The good transition arrangements, routines and care of the staff mean that children make a good start at becoming active learners. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils have made up ground, although their attainment is still below average overall. Parents and carers commented how quickly their children had settled into the school and enjoy it, thanks to the staff. While many children make up ground, their progress is only satisfactory because assessment data is not used rigorously enough to inform planning. Children who are more able are not able to excel as they might, because observations do not always recognise the level of challenge they need. The resources available, such as construction, or the home corner, do not always challenge their thinking. Children are beginning to develop the confidence to access resources themselves although many still do not work independently enough. The size and layout of the classroom constrains this at times. Leadership of this area of the school is relatively new, although well supported by more experienced colleagues. Adults are skilled at promoting positive attitudes to learning and work well together. Values such as fairness and respect for others are well promoted.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires received by the inspection team represented just over a quarter of pupils which is below the average response rate. However, the school have themselves recently undertaken a survey which was also considered. Almost all parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire indicated positive views about the school. There were very few negative views. The most negative view was about whether the school deals effectively with poor behaviour. Inspectors found that the school has introduced effective systems to manage any incidents of poor behaviour, and that these are implemented as efficiently as procedures allow. Pupils themselves felt that the school deals with any incidents well, and they were supportive of each other when someone was finding things difficult. Informal views of parents and carers gathered at the start of the school day agreed with the highly positive views of the school expressed in the parents' and carers' questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fernhill 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	52	24	46	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	52	24	46	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	56	23	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	48	23	44	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	50	25	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	48	25	48	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	44	28	54	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)	21	40	28	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	40	28	54	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	25	22	42	8	15	4	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	29	30	58	5	10	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	17	33	28	54	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	42	27	52	3	6	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	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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fernhill Primary School, Farnborough, GU14 9BY

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, and for showing us the work you were doing. Many of you said how much you enjoy school and we could see that you are proud to be part of Fernhill Primary; we were impressed with your singing of the school song. We have judged that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things that it does well, but there are a few things it could do better.

These are some of the things it does well.

- There has been a big effort to help you do better in reading and mathematics, and your results have improved in these areas.
- Teaching is good in a few lessons, and staff are working to make sure it gets better in other lessons.
- The adults at the school care about you and make sure there is someone you can talk to if you are worried or need help. The headteacher and governors have made sure the school does everything it can to keep you safe. This helps you to feel safe at school.
- The school has encouraged you to be at school when you should be, and your attendance has improved; well done. There are still a few pupils who need to make sure they are at school more often.
- Most of you behave well in lessons and around the school. Occasionally a few pupils let themselves down and do not focus on their learning as they should. The school is helping to make sure this does not disrupt your lessons.

These are the things we have asked the school to improve.

- Help you to improve your writing, by giving you realistic reasons to write and encouraging you to get more done in the time you have.
- Make sure that those of you who find learning more difficult get the support you need in all the lessons you do
- Helping the younger children in the Reception class, to choose more activities for themselves by giving them more equipment and opportunities to do harder tasks.

You should continue to enjoy your learning and help to make your school an even better place to learn and have fun together.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders

Additional inspector

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