

Farnham Heath End School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125248
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	359867
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Gill Close HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	923
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Spencer
Headteacher	Nicholas Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 34 lessons taught by 34 teachers, and held meetings with students, staff and governors. Their observations of the school's work included registrations, tutor periods, assembly, extra-curricular activities and lunchtime. They looked at records of students' attainment and progress, improvement planning, self-evaluation, lesson monitoring documents, policies, minutes of governing body meetings, exclusion data and attendance figures. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 128 parents and carers, 121 students and 58 staff.

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

- The progress current students make overall and in English and mathematics, particularly by those groups which had previously made weaker progress, such as boys, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The effectiveness of teaching and assessment in contributing to students' learning in all year groups.
- The effectiveness with which support and care are targeted for all students and for those who are vulnerable, including the group with previously persistent absence.
- The accuracy and rigour with which leaders at all levels contribute to school improvement through target setting, tracking, evaluation and planning.

Information about the school

Farnham Heath End School is a specialist mathematics and computing school. It is of average size for a secondary school. A very large majority of its students are of White British heritage. A small number come from a wide range of other ethnic groups, of whom very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low. An average percentage of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the main ones being moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Fewer students than average have a statement of special educational needs. The school has gained the Full International School award, Quality in Study Support status and National Healthy School status. The headteacher joined the school in September 2010, since when there have also been new appointments to the senior leadership team.

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

Farnham Heath End School is providing a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Students make satisfactory progress and develop personal qualities particularly well. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, for example through the house and prefect systems, helping younger students to read and the very active school council. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in their confident discussion of meaningful issues with members of other year groups and the empathetic support they give each other, encouraged by the mixed-age tutor groups. Most groups of students have high attendance, representing a substantial improvement since last year when more students than average were persistent absentees. Behaviour is good. Students say that they enjoy school and feel very safe.

Most aspects of the care, guidance and support provided by the school are strong and contribute to the high standard of students' personal development. However, during the inspection, weaknesses were identified in one of the systems for ensuring that safeguarding procedures were fully in place, which the school rectified by the end of the inspection.

The many strengths in teaching contribute to it being good overall. Nevertheless, in a minority of lessons, students are not supported or challenged well enough, are passive for too long, or are not asked to assess how they have improved. Such lessons, coupled with some weaknesses in students' previous progress, lead to a variation in progress between subjects and groups of students, with boys making less progress than girls. Consequently, progress and achievement are satisfactory rather than good. Senior leaders have rightly identified that students' targets were not sufficiently demanding to underpin good progress and have increased their challenge and consistency this year. The improved data are assisting staff in monitoring students' progress more effectively, but they do not show easily how well groups of students are performing or being involved in school life. Opportunities are missed to provide parents with information about the detail of their child's progress and how they can support learning.

The new headteacher provides impetus and clear direction after the recent dip in performance. He and the senior leadership team have enthused staff to sharpen the focus on raising students' progress. Many leaders monitor teaching quality and help it to improve, but some weaknesses have not been tackled quickly enough and the most important areas for development have not been identified and supported centrally, for example through systematic sharing of good practice.

The school has judged accurately that students' learning and progress are satisfactory, but some other self-evaluations are not critical enough to provide insights into how to improve. There is not a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of interventions and other initiatives, or acting on parents' views. The new headteacher and senior leaders

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have correctly identified the need for more focused plans and have begun to develop them. In the observations carried out jointly with inspectors, judgements were generally accurate. Although some outcomes are lower than at the time of the last inspection, the improvements this year, such as the marked increase in attendance, better progress by previously underachieving groups and systems put in place, demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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?

- Raise attainment and progress across all year groups through a relentless drive on improving teaching quality to consistently good or better, by:
 - meeting the needs of and challenging all students, using data on the progress of individuals and groups to do so
 - ensuring that all students are routinely engaged in active collaborative learning and responding to questions
 - involving all students frequently in assessing their progress against targets they understand and are able to act upon
 - informing parents more about their child's progress and how they can support their child's learning.
- Increase the rigour and consistency with which leaders at all levels ensure improvement, through:
 - greater accuracy in evaluation and sharpness in development planning
 - use of data that show more readily for groups of students their performance against challenging targets and their involvement in school life
 - more effective monitoring of teaching, identification and support of areas for development, and challenging of underperformance
 - routine evaluation of the impact of interventions and other initiatives
 - more assiduous monitoring by senior leaders and governors that statutory requirements are met
 - more methodical sharing of good practice
 - systematically seeking the views of parents and acting upon them.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons, students generally apply themselves well to their work. The progress they make varies across subjects and between groups. In its self-evaluation, the school judged accurately that students' learning and progress are satisfactory. Senior leaders identified correctly that the inadequate progress in 2010 made by boys, students known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who receive support through school action plus arose particularly through low attendance and constraints in the alternative curriculum for a group of lower attainers. They have taken steps that have improved attendance and

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altered provision to enable low attainers to spend more time on English and mathematics. Current students in these groups are now making better progress. Senior leaders also rightly identified that one of the factors in the satisfactory progress made by other students in 2010 was that their targets were insufficiently demanding, and have introduced more challenging ones. The school's data show that, in 2010, students reached above-average standards in mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 3, but made below-expected progress in English during Key Stage 3. The current records for each year group show varying progress but it is satisfactory overall and for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with boys making less progress than girls.

By the end of Key Stage 4, students reached broadly average standards in the last three years. Attainment in relation to the national average has risen since the last inspection in some respects, such as the proportion of grades A* to A at GCSE, but it has fallen in others and was below the school's 2010 target for the proportion of GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics. The school's predictions, based on current data, are for this to rise in 2011.

Students understand well how to stay healthy. They all have at least two hours of physical education each week and many attend extra-curricular activities. However, almost half of the students who completed the questionnaire disagreed that the school helped them to be healthy. Some felt that such lifestyles were not promoted strongly while others cited the range of food available in the canteen.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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

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How effective is the provision?

In the majority of lessons, teaching is at least good and students greatly enjoy their learning. Teachers make clear their high expectations and involve students in assessing how well they are meeting targets, such as through well-designed opportunities to judge their own and each other's work. They plan lively and interesting collaborative activities that meet students' needs and ensure all are challenged to think hard. Teachers probe understanding using carefully crafted questions and, through well-focused marking, show students how to improve. Nevertheless, there is a minority of lessons in which teaching is no more than satisfactory and, occasionally, inadequate. In such lessons, students are not actively enough involved through working together, discussion or responding to questions. They spend too long listening or on undemanding writing tasks, and sometimes their behaviour is not well managed. Students are not clear enough about how well they are doing or how to improve. In mathematics, there is too little emphasis on building students' understanding of the concepts and methods they are being taught.

The curriculum is broad and regularly adjusted to meet students' needs, for example through a mathematics course for the highest attainers and a pathway for some lower attainers offering vocational options with additional support in academic subjects. Examples of the wide range of courses are those in double foreign languages, triple science, performing arts, and countryside and environment. Independent and cross-curricular learning skills are developed well in Year 7. The specialism in information and communication technology (ICT) has made a strong impact on the curriculum, including enabling the vast majority of students to take GCSE ICT, in which attainment is high. It has supported the development of the virtual learning environment on which independent learning tasks lasting for two weeks are set for homework. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support for this work. Nevertheless, some opportunities are lost for more regular development of skills and understanding through homework. Students enjoy the range of enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs.

Concerted efforts have led to a substantial rise in attendance and drop in the proportion of students who are persistently absent. They include close links with primary schools and targeted work with parents. A range of approaches, such as counselling, have contributed to the drop in fixed-term exclusions shown by the school's data. Senior leaders have improved the analyses of exclusions by student group although the presentation does not make it straightforward to monitor the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are excluded in relation to national figures. Students say they appreciate the care that staff provide for them. They feel very safe and know who to turn to if there is a problem. They say that bullying is generally followed up effectively, but a few students and parents expressed concern about instances not being fully resolved.

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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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher and senior leadership team have set in place systems providing greater accountability, which have already led to improvements. Most middle leaders evaluate provision and outcomes effectively, and use their findings to make improvements, although there are inconsistencies.

To promote community cohesion, the school offers opportunities to experience other cultures. To involve more students directly, it is in the process of changing its international links to a less distant country. Plans closer to home for developing the socio-economic dimension of community cohesion, and the evaluation of the impact of the school's actions, are at early stages. As part of the school's approach to promoting equality of opportunity for all students, it identified previous underachievement by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and its actions this year have raised their progress. In the last three years, students known to be eligible for free school meals attained substantially below other students in the school and below their group nationally. The school's data show that these gaps are beginning to close across year groups. However, records do not provide ready information for teachers and leaders of the progress and participation of groups.

The governing body is involved in setting priorities. It collects the views of students through the attendance of the head girl and head boy at its meetings, although it does not have systematic ways of seeking and acting on parents' views. Its procedures lack rigour for ensuring that policies and associated arrangements, such as those for equality of opportunity and safeguarding, are fully in place. Safeguarding procedures were in place at the end of the inspection, but had not been fully so at the beginning of the inspection. Vetting of staff and visitors is good, as are child protection procedures. The school works well with a range of partners, who contribute strongly to students' achievement and well-being. The partnerships broaden the curriculum, particularly through apprenticeships and vocational pathways, provide links with employers, improve transition from primary school, and give support to vulnerable students.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

An average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A very large majority of them are happy with their child's experience at the school. They agree that their child enjoys school and feels safe, and that the school is led and managed effectively. Three quarters of respondents agree that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that there are opportunities for views to be expressed and many prompt responses from staff, but that there are occasions when concerns have not been followed up well and there is room for more systematic use of parents' and carers' views in evaluation and development planning. For the remaining questions, a very large majority of parents agree with the statements. A few parents and carers disagree that the school meets their child's particular needs, that teaching is good or that their child makes enough progress. Some of them commented on pockets of weaker teaching. Inspectors found that, while teaching is good overall, a minority is satisfactory or below. In these weaker lessons, teaching does not always challenge or support all students well. Inspectors found that students' progress is satisfactory, although it varies across year groups and subjects. A very small minority of parents and carers disagree that the school informs them about their child's progress or helps them to support their child's learning. Inspectors found that the two-week independent homework tasks provide information for parents, but there is room for improvement in the communication of ongoing expectations and performance through exercise books and planners.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farnham Heath End 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 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 923 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	34	73	57	9	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	29	84	66	5	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	28	76	59	13	10	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	27	77	60	8	6	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	29	23	82	64	8	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	23	77	60	11	9	5	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	10	94	73	14	11	1	1
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)	31	24	79	62	8	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	24	77	60	13	10	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	22	78	61	9	7	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	9	85	66	11	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	23	85	66	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	38	65	51	10	8	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.



11 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Farnham Heath End School, Farnham, GU9 9BN

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school and for telling us about it. We were very impressed by the excellent way you take on responsibility and discuss issues with each other, particularly in your mixed-age tutor groups.

You told us that you enjoy most of your teaching but that some is not as interesting. We found that teaching is good but that there are some lessons that are not challenging enough for all of you or do not support you well enough by involving you actively in working together, discussing, answering questions or assessing your progress. This contributes to you making different progress across subjects and years, which is satisfactory overall. Senior leaders have made your targets more challenging to help you make better progress. We have asked them to raise progress by improving teaching so that it is all good or better and by making it easier to check how well groups of you are doing in relation to your targets. You can help by participating actively in lessons and being sure you know how to improve.

Attendance overall has risen this year and most of you have high attendance. We found that you behave well, although there are occasions when behaviour dips or when bullying is not fully resolved. Many of you who answered our questionnaire thought that the school could do more to help you be healthy. A very large majority of you and your parents informed us that you enjoy school and feel very safe.

The new headteacher and senior leaders have already identified important ways for the school to improve. We have asked them to use more consistent and rigorous ways to ensure improvement, evaluate impact and monitor that requirements are met.

I wish you success at school and in helping it to improve.

Yours sincerely

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector

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