

Farnworth Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111394
Local Authority	Halton
Inspection number	367988
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Gill Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr John Swain
Headteacher	Mr Barry Cregeen
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors observed 16 lessons and 13 teachers. They held meetings with members of the Interim Executive Board, the local authority, staff, parents and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at some of the documentation, including minutes from the Interim Executive Board meetings, school improvement planning, lesson and curriculum plans and data about pupils' progress.

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

- The extent to which the variation in the quality of teaching between classes is adversely affecting pupils' progress.
- How well the curriculum matches individual learning needs, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which the school has tackled the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- The extent to which leaders at all levels take into account the views of the school community.

Information about the school

Farnworth is a larger-than-average sized school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below that found nationally and very few have a statement of special educational needs.

Staffing difficulties led to the Interim Executive Board and Halton local authority establishing a partnership with Wade Deacon High School, through its executive headteacher who is a National Leader in Education, in January 2010. A deputy headteacher from Wade Deacon is the seconded full-time headteacher at Farnworth. The partnership with Wade Deacon ends in August 2011 and a new substantive headteacher is appointed and will start in September 2011. The new headteacher is visiting the school weekly as part of the transition arrangements agreed by the Interim Executive Board.

The school provides a breakfast- and after-school club, Whizzkids. These are not managed by the governing body and a separate report for them can be found on the Ofsted website.

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

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Significant progress has been made in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and the school now provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education.

Children get off to a good start in Reception. From levels of skills and abilities typical of four- and five-year-olds they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage reaching levels of knowledge, skills and understanding above the national average for their age. Pupils go on to make satisfactory progress attaining above the national average for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics. Although this represents satisfactory achievement overall, some pockets of underachievement remain. Many of the pupils' personal qualities, such as their behaviour, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They enjoy school, which is evident in their excellent attendance. Staff, pupils and parents testify to the improvements made since the last inspection. They appreciate the positive impact of the headteacher who has led the school determinedly and successfully out of special measures. Staff are increasing their skills in developing teaching and learning, which are improving strongly. They are highly ambitious to improve the outcomes for pupils. Strong leadership at all levels is driving improvement well, with significant success.

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. The quality of teaching still varies between subjects, classes and year groups as is evident from data about pupils' progress, particularly where frequent staff absence disrupts continuity in learning. In the good lessons, teachers motivate the pupils well. They use every opportunity to increase pupils' understanding of how to improve their work, providing good feedback through accurate marking. They question pupils effectively and adapt their lesson plans according to pupils' individual learning needs. Conversely, in the satisfactory lessons, teachers are less aware of the subtle differences in pupils' understanding because they do not observe and listen to pupils' responses carefully enough. Consequently, the work set does not always match pupils' different abilities well enough to promote good learning and progress. The curriculum places a good emphasis on practical activities, including exciting visits and visitors to the school. However, these opportunities are not always effective in securing pupils' good progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

The headteacher, supported well by the senior leadership team, is working systematically to eradicate the weaknesses identified when the school was placed in special measures in June 2009. Pupils are set challenging targets and senior leaders evaluate their progress towards them regularly. However, not all staff use this data confidently to evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning and progress. The Interim Executive Board has

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a clear and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness. For example, it has identified the need to work more closely with parents and carers to support their children's learning, though this work is at an early stage of development. The extent of the improvement since the last inspection, which includes successfully raising pupils attainment and achievement, and the qualities within the senior leadership team show there is good 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 pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - matching work accurately to learning needs so that all pupils have sufficient challenge
 - sustaining and developing the use of target-setting and pupil progress data to ensure all staff evaluate the impact of their work against the outcomes achieved by pupils.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that all lessons consistently match the quality of the best by:
 - using questioning effectively to help deepen pupils' understanding of their work
 - observing pupils at work carefully to assess what they need to learn next and adapting lesson plans where necessary.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - converting the exciting opportunities existing in the curriculum into good learning experiences designed to secure higher-level literacy and numeracy skills
 - developing the teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting systematically across the school to support pupils' development as competent writers.
- Improve the schools engagement with parents and carers by:
 - seeking and taking their views into account regularly
 - providing opportunities for them to support their children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils start Year 1 with skills, knowledge and abilities that are above the national average for their age. Their attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 improved in 2010 and remains above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. School data demonstrates that most of the oldest pupils are now on track to reach the standards expected for 11-year-olds and their progress is now satisfactory. However, there are some year groups where pupils' attainment is below that expected for their abilities, particularly where the pupils have sustained continuous disruption to teaching. The underachievement exists particularly in the relatively low proportion of pupils set to gain the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and the higher Level 3 in writing in Key Stage 1. Progress in mathematics in several year groups is well below that in English. The spelling of some pupils in the lower part of Key Stage 2 is relatively weak, mainly because phonic

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teaching was inconsistent across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils' exercise books demonstrate their improving standards. The volume of work is increasing and pupils are taking more pride in the presentation of their work. This is also evident in the improving quality of display in the corridors and classrooms. Pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress.

In lessons, pupils show positive attitudes and generally enjoy their learning. They cooperate well in groups and support each other well when problem solving. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, one pupil helped another to find the factors of 42 by using multiplication tables effectively. However, in a similar lesson, the work set was too challenging for the attainment levels of some pupils because their understanding and ability to use multiplication tables is weak. Consequently, they did not enjoy their learning sufficiently to make good progress. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils worked well in small groups to discuss apartheid in response to the class novel 'Journey to Jo'burg. They showed empathy and understanding in their discussions and were willing to challenge each other's views sensibly. Year 1 pupils sustained their concentration well during a science lesson about plants. They carried out their set tasks independently while the teacher worked with groups to plant seeds. However, this level of independence does not always result in high quality work because teachers sometimes place insufficient emphasis on teaching the skills pupils need, such as how to use new oil pastels in art.

Pupils are confident and articulate. They make friends easily, are polite and friendly to visitors and are good ambassadors for the school. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They know what to do if there is bullying and have a good knowledge of the dangers posed by the internet and social networking sites. Pupils know how to keep fit and healthy and are keen to join the good range of extra-curricular sports activities, including the outdoor and adventurous residential visits. They contribute well to the local community, raising money for charity and taking part in events at the local church. The school council is active and pupils are proud of their achievements, such as ordering play equipment for the school field. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is satisfactory. Although most pupils achieve the expected literacy and numeracy skills for their age, there are too few opportunities for them to be involved in enterprise projects and to use information and communication technology in the curriculum.

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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	2
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	2
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	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?

Within the profile of satisfactory teaching inspectors observed some good lessons that contain the following common features: clear lesson planning; activities matching pupils' different ability levels well; resources and practical activities which captured pupils' interest; effective questioning deepening pupils' understanding and challenging their thinking; and teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in a Year 3 geography lesson the pupils had to match cards showing an address and picture to a location on a map. The teacher supported pupils well by discussing features of the locations, questioning effectively to ensure they understood before introducing coordinates to find a location on a map. Consequently, pupils made good progress in their understanding of maps, direction and the use of symbols. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not pick up quickly enough whether pupils are coping with the work set and do not adapt it during the lesson to meet pupils' learning needs effectively. Teachers' questioning too often requires minimal responses, limiting pupils' ability to deepen their knowledge of the subject. This slows pupils' progress.

The satisfactory curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides good enrichment opportunities, including lessons in French and Chinese. Staff are working well to ensure the curriculum engages pupils' interest and it has improved significantly since the last inspection. A good focus on practical activities, such as building nets in mathematics, is promoting good learning. Short daily lessons in basic skills are having a positive impact on

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improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, the acquisition of these skills is not systematic across the school, particularly in the key aspects of phonics, spelling, reading and handwriting.

The school has maintained its satisfactory level of care, guidance and support. Systems to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective and teaching assistants support these pupils well in lessons. There are some variations in the quality of care and support, mainly during lunchtimes, where there are inconsistencies in the way some lunchtime staff speak to pupils.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are highly ambitious for the future of the school. Excellent support and training, provided by the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and staff from Wade Deacon High School, is enabling the staff at Farnworth to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils effectively. Staff morale is high. Staff at all levels are evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and working together well as a whole staff team to secure improvements. For example, they moderate pupils' writing together regularly as part of the ongoing work to increase the accuracy of teachers' assessment. The Interim Executive Board has resolved significant staffing difficulties recently, securing improvement in all the areas identified at the last inspection. New appointments to the school, including the new headteacher, are strengthening the senior leadership team effectively and the school is now in a strong position to improve rapidly.

The school meets all the statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils' health, safety and well-being. Its work with other agencies to support pupils' learning and well-being is satisfactory. Robust monitoring of pupils' progress and attainment by the senior leadership team ensures that all pupils benefit equally from the provision and make satisfactory progress. The school is developing its engagement with parents and carers to support pupils' learning, which it recognises as a weaker aspect of its work. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The pupils have strong links with the parish and local community, but are less aware of the diverse cultures in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

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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	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	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	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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the class routines. Parents say their children, 'love coming to school' and have 'grown in confidence'. This was evident in a class assembly on the theme of, 'The little red hen'. Children spoke clearly and confidently enabling the audience of parents and carers to hear every word. They were well prepared for the experience by the staff and consequently achieved a good level of success.

Children are confident learners and keen to take part in all the activities available, both indoors and outdoors. However, the activities provided outdoors do not match the high quality of those in the classroom. Staff take good account of children's welfare and learning needs. Their planning ensures that all children access the six areas of learning regularly. Staff support children well in their writing, with a good focus on teaching them to form letters correctly. Children are learning their letters and sounds daily and are making good progress in early reading and writing skills. By the end of their Reception Year, most children achieve levels of skills, knowledge and understanding above that expected for their age and their progress is good.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff are working effectively together to plan the children's learning journey and, as a result, children are very well prepared for starting the National Curriculum in Year 1.

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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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



20 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Farnworth Church of England Controlled Primary School,
Cheshire, WA8 9HS**

You may remember that I visited your school recently with another inspector to see how well it is doing. Thank you to those of you who spoke to us in the dining hall, the playground, in lessons and to the school council. We listened to your views carefully and found them helpful.

Congratulations! We judged that your school is no longer in need of special measures. It is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. The inspectors agree with you: your school is improving. Many of you said how much you appreciate Mr Cregeen's leadership. He is providing more opportunities, particularly in sports and residential visits. You say your lessons are more interesting and exciting. During our visit we saw this in action when the youngest children performed their assembly of 'The little red hen', you made 3D shapes and learnt about factors in mathematics, street danced in physical education and discussed apartheid in English.

Although your lessons and the curriculum are more interesting, inspectors have identified some things which still need to improve. We know you are capable of reaching higher standards. To help you to do this we have asked your school to:

- raise your achievement in English and mathematics
- make sure all your lessons are as good as the very best lessons in the school
- make sure the exciting curriculum provides you with good learning experiences to improve your literacy and numeracy skills
- include your parents more in helping you to learn.

You can help your teachers by always trying your hardest and continuing to be polite and helpful. I hope that you will enjoy working with your new headteacher and that you give a big thank you to Mr Cregeen and Wade Deacon High for all the help they have provided over the past 17 months. I wish you the very best for the future and good luck to Year 6 in your new school!

Yours sincerely

Gill Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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