

# Farnham Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115189
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	379032
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Rogers

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen O'Brian (Executive)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Farnham  Bishop's Stortford CM23 1HR
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector who inspected five part-lessons, so observing the whole of the teaching staff of five. She also made shorter visits to classes to look at displays, observing individual pupils and groups at work and check on health and safety. The inspector scrutinised planning, talked to pupils and looked at their work. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school leaders. The inspector also looked at school documentation, including safeguarding records, monitoring files and the school development plan. She analysed survey responses from pupils and staff, as well as 23 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. She looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by all groups of pupils, especially in writing.
- The impact of the work of senior leaders on improving the quality of teaching and the use of assessment.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all learners, including those with behavioural problems and other special needs.
- The impact of leaders at the Farnham and Rickling schools, on improvement at Farnham.

## Information about the school

Farnham is a small village school that admits pupils from the surrounding rural area, as well as from Farnham itself. Five part-time teachers take three classes in the morning and two in the afternoon between them. Girls make up approximately one third of the pupil population, and there is a gender imbalance in some year groups. The percentage of pupils, who are eligible for free school meals, is low. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities attending the school at the moment. Over one fifth of the pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is roughly double the national average. Some children have behavioural problems and other difficulties are mainly in the realm of communication.

The school is currently in a soft federation with another small Church of England school, Rickling. The headteacher of Farnham School manages both schools and other posts of management responsibility are distributed across the two schools. The schools share a special needs coordinator, six subject coordinators and an ICT technician. There is a senior teacher based in each school. Most of the staff are recent appointees. There has also been turnover in the governing body. There is currently a temporary chair and several governors have new areas of responsibility. It has been agreed that the schools will shortly become a hard federation.

Farnham is a silver award Eco School that has also achieved the Healthy Schools Award. The school's Investor in People award was revalidated in June 2009.

**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 school continues to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils. The overwhelming strength of the school is in the quality of its relationships. Pupils feel extremely safe and well cared for and they all know each other. As one pupil said, 'Everyone is massive good friends'. Parents are equally positive about the school making comments such as, 'This is a unique and very happy school'.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics, due to satisfactory teaching. There are green shoots of improvement showing this term with some pupils now making good progress in mathematics and writing. Part of the improvement is a result of revisions to the curriculum. The school has worked hard to develop themes of work that are appealing to pupils, make good use of the local environment and share the expertise of staff at both schools. These themes build in opportunities to practise basic skills in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress, although again there are signs of improvement recently. This is partly because the school has been reorganised, with a very high staffing ratio to provide an additional class in the mornings. The new special needs leader has been assiduous in ensuring that special educational needs are now clearly identified and relevant interventions put in place.

Pupils' personal development is good because of well planned schemes of work and the strong influence of the school's community ethos. Pupils behave well and are very polite and proud of their school. They have good social skills, collaborate effectively and play together very harmoniously. Pupils in their turn are successful in contributing to village life and some even help to run lessons during their weekly enrichment afternoons at Farnham school.

Leaders are extremely clear about what they have to do to improve teaching. However, considerable staff changes, the fact that the senior leaders are all relatively new in post and the amount of time consumed, by procedures surrounding the formation of the hard federation of the two schools, have all meant that the pace of improvement has been relatively slow until recently. Teachers work hard and conscientiously and are well regarded by pupils and parents. They have effected improvements in their use of assessment. However, they do not give pupils enough information to make sure that they are consistently clear what they have to do to improve their work. Sometimes more-able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. This is because new teachers are not always clear enough about what is required or are not held to account rigorously enough to ensure that pupils make better progress.

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The appointment of new leaders who work in both schools has been a very successful. The impact of change already initiated by capable new leaders in both schools demonstrates that the school now has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Up to 40% of schools 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?

Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good by:

- Ensuring that staff are very clear about what is expected from their teaching and are held to account through rigorous monitoring.
- Making sure teachers give pupils regular specific feedback on how to improve, carefully matched to their ability.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children enter the school with a range of abilities, in cohorts that are often as small as three children. Classes are correspondingly small and very well staffed, so pupils get plenty of attention and enjoy a curriculum that is tailored to their individual needs. A new tracking system is helping teachers know exactly where pupils are in their learning. Teachers are still developing their skills in deciding where to pitch tasks so that every pupil is challenged at the optimum level. Pupils' progress is currently satisfactory in all subjects and those who are capable usually achieve the expected Level 4 in their tests at the end of Year 6. Progress in writing is improving because learners are given more opportunities to write and there is more emphasis on quality though 'talk for writing'. For example, junior pupils were heard trialling different descriptive phrases in pairs as they learned about personification. Teachers have introduced target setting systems that focus pupils on some identified areas of improvement in writing. Teachers know that these need developing further to ensure that pupils get more specific information on how to improve on a day to day basis. Progress in mathematics has also improved through the introduction of more practical, relevant work.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and recognise how fortunate they are to have such a high level of individual attention. Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall, though some are now making good progress. Those with behavioural problems are well supported, through good liaison with parents and other agencies and one to one support. Pupils with language difficulties also have the

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benefit of small group support from teaching assistants who are becoming increasingly effective. Although girls are in the minority their progress equals that of boys and teachers are aware of the need to monitor their social and academic progress. In one class for example, the teacher was seen withdrawing the girls for extra tuition in mathematics, to make sure that they understood.

Pupils have good knowledge about staying healthy and are keen to participate in physical education. They also have a good understanding about how to stay safe. Their knowledge about other cultures is more limited and is satisfactory. Many pupils hold posts of responsibility, representing their year groups on the eco-council, healthy food committee and the school council. They have a very strong sense of self and of right and wrong. Their good social skills and average attainment in English and mathematics demonstrate that they are adequately equipped for the next stages in their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

Much thought has gone into designing a curriculum that is flexible enough to cater for a range of needs in every class. It provides opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills and contributes hugely to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils especially like the enrichment afternoon held at Rickling school. At this time pupils are offered a good range of activities that cover all creative aspects of the national curriculum and give them the option to choose for themselves and develop independence. Many of these sessions are taught by parents or other members of

<sup>1</sup> 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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the community, thus developing community cohesion. The curriculum is underpinning improvements in pupils’ progress.

Teaching is satisfactory and also showing signs of improvement. Planning is detailed and teachers give much thought to providing for the different pupils in their care. They work hard to provide interesting resources and to motivate pupils through their enthusiasm and using interactive whiteboards. There is good communication between teachers and support staff so that all know their role in lessons. At times, teachers do not explain clearly enough what is expected of pupils so that everyone understands what to do. Teachers are now more effective in their use of assessment and marking and so are able to pay more attention to setting different work for different abilities. They do not always modify tasks sufficiently to ensure there is enough challenge right from the start of the lesson. In addition, lessons sometimes progress too slowly and so learning is limited.

Teachers are patient and positive with their pupils and have been influential in building relationships that are key to this school. Pupils say that there is always someone they can talk to if they are worried and they are well supported if they have problems or needs.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Parents work well with teachers to develop their children’s learning. They have made it clear that they value the headteachers’ open door approach and are very happy with the school. The high turnover of staff and governors has made it difficult for the head to sustain consistency and improvement because new teachers have to be trained. Nevertheless, leaders and governors have been able to work together with their counterparts at Rickling school to shape an effective solution.

Leaders’ vision is good and they understand very clearly what needs to be done to improve the school. The new leadership arrangements are already becoming effective in moving the school forward. Governors and leaders have also worked together to reorganise classes so that pupils get more individual attention as necessary; they are also involved in the monitoring of teaching. Leaders understand that their vision is not being expedited as effectively as it could be because communication and monitoring are not robust enough. There is insufficient detail given to staff for them to know what is expected and not enough consistency in

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follow up.

Governors and leaders are satisfactory in their ability to carry out their their statutory duties. Safeguarding of pupils is correspondingly satisfactory, as is the promotion of equal opportunity. The school is a very cohesive community but there is not yet enough attention paid to developing national and international links.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle in quickly as the school is so small and there is good communication with parents. The six children in the current Reception year group all have siblings at the school, so both pupils and parents felt that they were familiar with the community already.

Reception children work with Year 1 pupils in the morning and with the whole of Key Stage 1 in the afternoons. As in other classes the teachers work hard, with some success, to meet the differing needs of the children. They adapt the tasks to suit attention spans that vary as the day moves on. Consequently, children respond well. For example, they were seen learning to count by matching bears to coloured beakers and by dancing to the beat of different musical instruments on successive days.

The teacher in charge of the Early Years Foundation Stage has taken and followed advice on assessment and keeps useful records of children’s progress, enabling the future planning of appropriate tasks. She has also led the development of the outdoor area. This has a range of activities designed to develop coordination skills and other areas of the curriculum. There has been a whole school focus on



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improving literacy; children in the Reception year group are making satisfactory progress, with some making good progress in specific areas, such as recognising letter sounds. Children generally behave well and work happily together. Staff work effectively to keep them engaged in small group situations. However, children are not always clear enough about what they might learn when they are working independently.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. There was a relatively high response to the questionnaire (23 pupils represented out of a total of 30) and no parents had any substantial criticisms to voice.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farnham Church of England 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 inspector received 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 30 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	74	5	22	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	74	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	16	70	4	17	3	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	61	8	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	70	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	74	4	17	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	65	6	26	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	57	8	35	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	74	5	22	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	74	6	26	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

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

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



7 December 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Farnham Church of England Primary School, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 1HR**

I am writing to thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school to carry out my inspection. Thank you also to those of you who filled in questionnaires and special thanks to those of you who gave up time to speak to me. I really enjoyed talking with you. You were very polite and well behaved. It was lovely to see how much you like your school and to see how hard you try in your lessons.

It was great to hear that you feel so safe at school. I too think that your teachers and support staff do a good job in looking after you. I was pleased that you know so much about keeping healthy and look after each other so nicely. I was also impressed by how involved you all are in school life, with your various committees such as the healthy food committee. The enrichment afternoons at Rickling sound really interesting and seem to be one of the many reasons why you like your lessons so much.

I decided that your school is satisfactory. That means that some things are good and some things could be improved. You have quite a few new staff in both Farnham and Rickling who are already working hard to make your school even better. I have asked them to improve your lessons still more through:

- teachers working together with leaders so that they decide exactly what they want to improve in lessons and keep careful track of well they are doing
- teachers telling you exactly what you need to do to improve your work day by day and making sure that the work is not too hard and not too easy for all of you.

You can help with these improvements by continuing to work hard and doing your best at all times. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Rogers  
Lead inspector

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