

Freemantle Church of England Community Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136641
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	395467
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Joy Considine

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Melvyn Bradshaw
Headteacher	Kevin Barnett
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2008
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Age group	3–8
Inspection date(s)	16–17 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joy Considine	Additional inspector
Olson Davis	Additional inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. They listened to pupils read and they scrutinised their work. Discussions were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school development plans, pupils' assessment and tracking information and other documentation relating to the inspection, including safeguarding arrangements. They analysed the responses to questionnaires received from 98 parents and carers as well as those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Freemantle is larger than the average-sized primary school. It converted to academy status in April 2011. About half the pupils are from White British backgrounds and the others are from a variety of ethnic minority heritages of whom over one third speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. There is provision in the Nursery and Reception classes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school runs a daily before-and after-school club. In September 2011, the school expanded to admit Year 3 pupils and it will continue to grow to become a two-form entry primary school by September 2014. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to the teaching team and a major building project to accommodate the additional pupils has been completed.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It has built on previous strengths and is well placed to improve further. The school is highly inclusive, placing pupils’ achievement and well-being at the heart of what it does. It is not yet outstanding because teachers do not provide enough challenge for more-able pupils to help them to improve their writing skills. Additionally, a small minority of pupils are absent too often.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Their achievement in writing is weaker although, by the end of Key Stage 1, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils are articulate and communicate clearly. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive well-targeted support to help them to overcome their difficulties.
- Teaching is good. Pupils learn well because teaching is usually lively and engaging. Teachers provide activities that motivate pupils and inspire them to work hard. Although teachers provide pupils with detailed comments when marking their work, they do not always provide them with enough guidance about how they can improve their writing.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they behave well in school. Safeguarding is given high priority and there are good systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe. Attendance is no better than average because a small number of parents and carers do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.
- School leaders provide clear educational direction and have created a real sense of purpose among the school community. They understand the school’s strengths and weaknesses and are developing the skills of less experienced teachers so that they can take a more active role in monitoring teachers’ work, particularly in scrutinising pupils’ books. The planned programme of professional development, linked closely to performance management, has led to improvements in the quality of teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in writing so that a greater proportion of pupils attain the higher levels by July 2013 through:
 - providing pupils with clearer information about what they need to do to improve their work
 - improving the skills of teachers so that they accurately assess pupils' writing and plan appropriate activities to sharpen their skills
 - ensuring that middle leaders carry out a regular and thorough scrutiny of pupils' writing and provide guidance and support for teachers.

- Work more closely with parents and carers to intensify efforts to raise levels of attendance.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below expected levels for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their social skills and language and literacy. This is due to the strong emphasis given to broadening their experiences and providing activities that challenge and engage them. They responded with a sense of wonder and delight when brushing and stroking baby animals provided by a visiting farm. In class, they work cooperatively, sharing and taking turns. They make appropriate choices and enjoy taking part in activities, for example making model animals linked to their class topic.

Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well in reading and mathematics. In lessons, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they want to do well. This helps them to make good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn well because work is tailored to meet their needs and they receive good support to help them to meet their individual learning targets.

Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and they have learned a wide range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. The systematic way in which the linking of letters and sounds (phonics) is taught helps those in Key Stage 1 to reach standards that are average by the end of Year 2. In Year 3, this good progress continues so that pupils are able to use their reading skills independently to research their class topic as well as to read for pleasure. By the end of Year 3, their attainment in reading is better than typically found for pupils of this age.

Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they make a good start in learning to write but

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their progress slows in Years 2 and 3. Although the majority of pupils reach broadly average standards in writing, a few more-able pupils have not yet developed the necessary skills to enable them to write fluently and confidently. This is because they are not given enough guidance about how they can edit and improve their work.

Pupils have made good progress in their numeracy skills. Because of timetable constraints, it was not possible to observe any discrete mathematics lessons. However, in a design and technology lesson, pupils were demonstrating accuracy in measuring to make weather vanes. In another lesson, a group of pupils made tally charts to show favourite types of weather, following a survey of class members. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that most were able to solve number problems involving addition and subtraction accurately.

Quality of teaching

Teachers use stimulating methods to capture pupils' interest and inspire them to work hard. Parents and carers who responded to the survey agreed that teaching was good and that their children made good progress. Pupils say that the lessons are typically fun, with a variety of exciting activities. In one lesson, pupils explored the school grounds to find a treasure chest and used their imagination to write about what might be found inside the chest. Most teachers have high expectations and they plan lessons to meet the wide range of pupils' learning needs. This enables most pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to make good progress from their various starting points. However, a few teachers are over-generous when assessing pupils' writing and consequently work is not always challenging enough for more-able pupils.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that children get a good balance of activities between those they select for themselves and those that are led by adults. Staff make good use of space to create opportunities for children to work and play, outside as well as in classrooms. Adults carefully observe children's learning and use the resulting information to plan new experiences which build on previous learning. This enables children to make good progress in their development.

Teachers use assessment information to plan lessons that are mostly well matched to the learning needs of pupils. Systematic procedures for recording and tracking pupils' progress allow teachers to identify quickly those at risk of falling behind and to plan timely interventions to help them to catch up. Although teachers mark pupils' work and provide detailed comments about what they have done well, a few do not provide pupils with enough information about what they need to do to improve their work.

Most teachers are skilled at asking pupils questions that enable them to explain their thinking and to put forward their views and opinions. In some lessons, pupils are provided with opportunities to reflect on deeper issues. For example, pupils considered the moral dilemma of whether a character from *Where the Wild Things Are* should return home or stay with the wild creatures. This promoted a lively

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debate in which pupils reflected on the right course of action and made a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their typically good behaviour and their positive attitudes in lessons. Adults have consistent approaches to managing pupils' behaviour, although most pupils behave well because they enjoy learning. They say that bullying is rare and they have a good understanding of different types of bullying, such as physical, emotional and cyber-bullying. When disagreements do occasionally occur, adults are on hand to resolve issues quickly.

In lessons and in the playground, pupils are polite, considerate and helpful to adults and to each other. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the survey felt that behaviour and safety were good and that few lessons were disrupted by poor behaviour. Exclusions are rare and there are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour over time.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and feel they are well prepared to resist peer pressure associated with risks such as smoking. Older pupils mix readily with younger pupils at break times and this makes a good contribution to their social development. The activities provided for pupils at the beginning and end of the school day provide additional opportunities for pupils of all ages to play together and this makes a good contribution to their social development. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to work and play with those from different backgrounds. They show respect towards the cultures and beliefs of those from different parts of the world. Despite the school's best efforts to encourage good attendance, a small minority of parents and carers do not ensure that their children attend school regularly.

Leadership and management

School leaders and governors are ambitious and have high expectations of staff and pupils. They have successfully steered the school through a period of significant change while ensuring that pupils make good progress in their learning. This is due to the procedures for monitoring teachers' work, which are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching. Consequently, teaching is usually good and improving. Middle leaders are developing their skills in monitoring lessons but they are not all sufficiently involved in scrutinising pupils' writing.

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are innovative and have introduced initiatives to improve provision for pupils. For example, they have developed the school grounds to provide exciting opportunities for pupils to learn outside. Curriculum planning builds on the rich curriculum found in the Early Years Foundation Stage, so providing continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Strengths in provision for sports, art and music make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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The governing body is actively involved in many aspects of the school. Governors are provided with good quality information which they use effectively to monitor and challenge school leaders. The school's procedures for safeguarding are good. All adults are carefully checked and arrangements for protecting pupils are thorough. The governing body and leadership team ensure that equality and awareness of diversity are promoted well. Consequently, the growth in the number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds has been managed especially well, with pupils made to feel welcome and helped to achieve as well as other groups.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



21 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Freemantle Church of England Community Academy,
Southampton SO15 3 BQ**

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you all and listening to what you had to say about your school. You told us that teachers make lessons fun and that they provide you with interesting activities for you to do. You also told us that you enjoy working and playing with your friends and that most people are friendly and helpful.

We found that your school is a good school. Most of you work hard in your lessons and you make good progress in reading and mathematics. We agree that your teachers make lessons interesting and the school's leaders work hard to make teaching even better. Although you do a lot of writing, we found that not enough of you write as well as you should. We also found that not all of you attend school as often as you should.

This is what we have asked your school leaders to do to make your school even better.

- Ensure that teachers let you know what you need to do to improve your writing, give you the opportunity to correct your work, make sure that all school leaders regularly look at your books and make suggestions about how your writing can be improved.
- Work more closely with your parents and carers to encourage you to attend school at all times unless you are unwell.

I know that you will all do your best to help to make your school even better. You can help by asking teachers what you need to do to improve your writing and by telling your parents and carers how much you want to go to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Joy Considine
Lead Inspector

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