

Farndon Fields Primary School

Argyle Park, Market Harborough, LE16 9JH

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well because teaching is effective, lessons are interesting and those who need extra support get what they need.
- A high level of enthusiasm throughout the school community creates a very positive climate for learning.
- This successfully promotes pupils' progress and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A wide range of visitors, including those from a link school in Africa, visits and clubs contribute well to pupils' motivation and enjoyment.
- Highly effective care and guidance ensure that pupils feel safe, behave well and achieve successfully.
- Leaders are outward looking and constantly seek new ways to develop the school.
- Collaborative links with other schools and partnerships with external specialists have contributed well to improvements in teaching, achievement and attendance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school improvement plan shows the right actions to take, but not in enough detail for the governors to check how well they are being implemented.
- In lessons, teachers do not always check that pupils fully understand what they are learning about, and the work they set is occasionally too difficult for a few pupils.
- Teachers' marking does not always clearly show pupils how to improve their work.
- Leaders do not always monitor all aspects of teaching sufficiently carefully to ensure that improvements are implemented in all classes or sustained over time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, taught by all eight of the school’s teachers. Three observations were joint visits with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body who is also an Academy Trustee, senior and middle managers, parents and carers.
- Inspectors received the views of parents and carers through 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), informal discussions at the beginning of the day and a meeting with a parent who requested this.
- Inspectors received the views of staff through 27 responses to the inspection questionnaire and discussions. They received the views of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- They observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents including the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, leaders’ reports of lesson observations, the school’s improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Spors

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Farndon Fields is smaller than most other primary schools. Most classes contain two different age groups.
- It is situated within a mixed housing estate on the edge of Market Harborough.
- Almost all pupils speak English as their first language and are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional money given to schools by the government) is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at the level of school action is slightly higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The majority of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties.
- An additional 'intervention' class started in September 2012. Held only in the mornings, it caters for pupils in Years 5 and 6 whose circumstances or additional needs make them more vulnerable.
- The school became an academy in July 2012. The predecessor school was last inspected in January 2010, when its overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to outstanding by:
 - improving the frequency and rigour with which all aspects of teaching are monitored to ensure that any necessary improvements are implemented fully in all classes and sustained over time
 - ensuring that teachers rapidly identify and address any misconceptions which may slow progress
 - providing lesson activities that are consistently well matched to the learning needs of all pupils
 - showing clearly in all marking how pupils can improve their work.
- Include date targets and clearly indicate priorities in the school development plan in order to accelerate improvement and enable the governing body to hold leaders fully to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils generally start in the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding slightly below expectations for this age, especially in personal development and communication, language and literacy. A few start well below this.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment is above the national average. The proportions of pupils reaching expected and higher National Curriculum levels are both above average. School assessments indicate that nearly half the pupils reached higher levels in reading in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2012.
- Parents and carers are pleased with their children's progress. As one said: 'My daughter is really flying. She has come on in leaps and bounds.'
- Pupils who can learn more quickly or easily have made particularly good progress because teachers' expectations are high and lesson activities are challenging and open-ended. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 developed their understanding and use of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division well as they used equations to make totals of numbers 1 to 20 in many different ways.
- Disabled pupils and those who have other special educational needs also make good progress, due to good teaching and support. The new intervention class for older pupils, introduced to accelerate this progress even further, is already proving positive in terms of pupils' motivation and outcomes. Work in class is occasionally slightly too difficult for a very few of these pupils.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good progress. Gaps between their attainment and the national average are closing, and they are well prepared for later life and learning.
- Due to good support from adults and peers, the very few pupils learning English as an additional language are integrated well and make good progress in all aspects of learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Positive relationships, effective support and interesting activities all contribute to good teaching throughout the school. Pupils are engaged in stimulating activities and respond well to the high expectations from all staff.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is an effective balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities, both indoors and out. Activities and resources are of good quality, interesting and suitable for all.
- During the inspection, children developed their recognition, formation and use of letters of the alphabet through writing with chalk and water with paintbrushes outside, making letters out of modelling dough and matching the initial sounds of objects with lettered mats. More-able or experienced children used letters to write imaginative sentences about a book the class had read. All groups made good progress as they were engaged and active in their learning.
- Older pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, including the very few who find behaving consistently well difficult, are supported and extended very well in the intervention class.

- During the inspection 14 pupils were seen writing diligently in the intervention class, showing great perseverance and resilience in improving their writing. Teaching was excellent and, as pupils rapidly gained confidence and skills, they expressed imaginative thoughts such as 'the monster had floppy ears like wings' and 'the sudden silence as the ball hit the net'. Pupils gained self-esteem and showed respect for the efforts of others, this fostering their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Despite effective support, work in other classes is occasionally slightly too difficult for a very few pupils who find learning challenging. For example, in an English lesson, a lower-attaining boy struggled to read the newspaper report intended to stimulate discussion and further writing.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use and develop English and mathematics in other subjects. For example, in a lower Key Stage 2 class, pupils developed their language skills by learning how to make 'pop-up' books and verbally instructing the teacher how to do so. They also developed mathematical language and skills as they described and made differently-shaped mouths open and shut in another form of three-dimensional book.
- Teachers generally guide pupils well. However, occasionally they do not identify and address the misconceptions of a few quickly enough, which slightly slows their progress. For example, two pupils in an older class continued to identify names within a text in which the teacher wanted them to find key descriptions or adjectives.
- The effectiveness of marking varies. The best shows pupils what they have done well and what and how they could develop further. Some does not show pupils how to improve or progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Inspection observations and discussions with pupils, parents, carers and visitors to the school, along with scrutiny of school records, indicate that behaviour over time is good in and out of class.
- From their early days in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children successfully begin to develop confidence, independence and effective learning skills.
- Pupils are very positive about the school and learning. Younger children run excitedly into school at the beginning of the day, and older ones proudly show their work to others and are successfully motivated through success in weekly tests, star charts and certificates. None of the seven pupils at the pre-arranged meeting could think of anything they would change about the school.
- Relationships are warm, positive and supportive. Pupils work well together, successfully supporting, challenging and extending each other's learning and moral, spiritual and social development.
- Some of the pupils in the intervention class develop extremely positive attitudes to learning through very positive relationships and excellent teaching.
- The policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current national requirements.
- Pupils, staff, parents and carers are all aware that a very few pupils display more challenging behaviour. Leaders and staff are proactive in identifying and addressing this, including any inappropriate use of language. They support and manage this well through the consistent use of rewards and sanctions.
- A very few pupils say they have experienced very occasional bullying. However, they feel safe because they are confident that staff take this seriously, listen carefully and successfully tackle

and address the issues. As one girl said, 'I was brave and told a teacher and she sorted it out.'

- Pupils also say they feel safe because 'if you're hurt a friend can help you' and teachers 'help you a lot'. They also learn to keep themselves safe through special activities such as pedestrian safety for younger pupils and cycling safety for older ones.
- Parents and carers are positive about behaviour. One, reflecting the views of many, said, 'The school has a warm friendly atmosphere.'
- Attendance has risen and is now above average. No pupils were persistently absent last year.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels are ambitious and passionate about school development and welcome the challenge to improve. Their strong vision for school development is focused firmly on pupils' achievement. Good partnerships with leaders in other schools have successfully sharpened their leadership skills.
- The school is quick to act on advice and leaders have introduced many positive new initiatives. For example, links with schools in Africa are helping pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The introduction of a programme to raise the progress and well-being of all pupils through regular one-to-one interviews with staff is having a positive impact on attendance and achievement.
- The well-focused school development plan clearly shows areas for development, but it does not show time-lines or prioritise actions in order to accelerate these even further.
- Well-focused lesson monitoring has successfully raised the quality of teaching to good. It is not sufficiently frequent, widespread or detailed, however, to ensure that improvements are fully implemented and sustained in all classes, so that the quality rises to outstanding.
- Staff performance is managed and appraised effectively. This process guides staff training, and ensures that progress up the salary scale is strongly rooted in positive outcomes for all.
- Leaders successfully ensure equality of opportunity through a highly inclusive ethos and good teaching for all, even though work is occasionally at the wrong level for pupils who find learning more difficult.
- The curriculum is rich and well organised. Leaders have developed a detailed framework of essential key skills, and use this effectively to ensure breadth, balance and full coverage in all subjects.
- Additional pupil premium funding is successfully used to enhance pupils' achievement and well-being. Examples of this include a small informal breakfast club, additional staff supporting pupils in class and small withdrawal groups, and the creation of the intervention class.
- A successful track record of improvement, strong drive and ambition, and a highly positive school community all indicate that the school's capacity to sustain improvement is good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is focused and well organised
 - is supported by members who are experienced, knowledgeable and astute about education and school development
 - questions and challenges leaders but needs sharper improvement planning in order to hold leaders fully to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138345
Local authority	N/a
Inspection number	409366

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Kennedy
Headteacher	Stephen Snelson
Date of previous school inspection	N/a
Telephone number	01858 464744
Fax number	01858 433253
Email address	office@farndonfields.leics.sch.uk

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