

Far Forest Lea Memorial CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135034
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	381777
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Mark Sims HMI

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

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	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Owen
Headteacher	Tara Collins-Bullock
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Ten lessons were observed, taught by six teachers, of which nine were joint observations with the headteacher. This accounted for approximately six hours of inspection time in total. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff, including senior and middle managers, and a senior adviser from the local authority. The inspector observed the school's work and took account of a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, monitoring of teaching, safeguarding documents, and the school's own analysis of pupils' performance. Also 41 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed, along with those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Far Forest Lea is much smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average but on a rising trend. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average, including those on school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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. Under the determined leadership of the headteacher there have been rapid improvements across all areas of the school's work, not least in the quality of teaching, which is now good, and in pupils' achievement in English and mathematics which is also good. The school is not yet outstanding because there remain some inconsistencies in teaching and not all leaders are sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils have reached a standard in English and mathematics and science that is above average, having attained broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. Pupils' reading and writing are both about two terms above national expectations for their age. This represents good progress.
- Teaching is at least good in most lessons and at times is outstanding because teachers plan well for the diverse range of ages and abilities in their classes and ensure that pupils, whether they find learning easy or difficult, are challenged to do well. Pupils' written targets and teachers' marking do not always sufficiently inform pupils about how well they are doing and the next steps in learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in school and in lessons. Pupils thrive on opportunities to take responsibilities and make choices about their learning. Concerns were raised by a minority of parents but the majority of pupils are clear that behaviour has significantly improved. The large majority of pupils feel safe in school and attendance, which is now in line with the national average, is improving rapidly.
- Leadership and management are good because of the rapid improvements in the school. In addition to the headteacher most senior and middle leaders have developed their roles well, although not all take sufficient responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning and sharing the best practice in teaching

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within the school. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been transformed and is now outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more of the teaching is outstanding by:
 - providing success criteria that are clear about the intended learning outcomes of the lesson
 - checking at the end of the lessons how successful pupils have been against the intended learning outcomes
 - setting written targets with pupils which are dated and in language they can understand and which are regularly reviewed and linked to evidence to indicate whether they have been achieved
 - marking pupils' work so that pupils know how they can reach the next step in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to assess their own work.
- Ensure that leadership and management are consistently good at all levels by:
 - providing opportunities for all leaders to take greater responsibility for monitoring teaching
 - involving middle leaders more in reviewing pupil progress with teachers
 - sharing more widely the outstanding practice and leadership that exists within the school.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils join the school at broadly the expected starting point for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6 they are doing better in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils of a similar age. This had not been the situation in recent years and test results had been falling, especially in mathematics, but since the arrival of the headteacher there have been rapid improvements in the quality of pupils' learning. This has led to them making good progress in their lessons.

Children get off to an exceptionally fast start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make very rapid progress in a stunning learning environment, particularly outside where they thrive. Pupils learn well in Key Stage 1 where, despite the diverse ages and abilities, their different needs are met well. Attainment in reading is above average. Pupils' learning is more variable in Key Stage 2 ranging from outstanding to satisfactory depending on the year group. The best progress happens when pupils are clear about the learning outcomes, have opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and receive clear feedback about their next steps. In a few instances the pace of learning is slower where pupils spend too long on one task, or

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when they are less clear about their learning objectives or how to progress to the next step.

Recent test results at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average and the proportion of pupils achieving the highest possible levels is also high. Rigorous tracking shows that all groups of pupils progress well including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The learning needs of individuals, whose circumstance may make them vulnerable, including looked after children, are met very well. Almost all pupils have made at least the expected progress for their age in reading, writing and mathematics from Key Stage 1 to 2, with many exceeding the expected number of levels of progress. A large majority of parents and carers who expressed a view in the survey said their children are making good progress at this school. A small minority of pupils, including older ones said they were not sure how well they were doing in their subjects and were unsure what they needed to do to reach a higher level.

Quality of teaching

In the very best lessons teachers set high expectations so that pupils, whatever their starting points, are challenged. Teachers use technical vocabulary with even the very youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage where teaching is outstanding. Lesson plans ensure that activities are set according to the previous attainment of groups of pupils. In most classes, especially in Key Stage 1, there is a very wide range of ability but teachers engage almost all pupils successfully in their learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support higher- as well as lower-attaining pupils and work effectively on interventions with the very small number of individuals identified as at risk of falling behind. In one outstanding mathematics lesson seen in Key Stage 2, pupils were given choices in their learning, which concerned solving problems in a logical order. Pupils respond particularly well to practical activities in mathematics and science but a very small number of boys are less enthusiastic about writing.

The pace of most lessons is brisk and a focus on group tasks or role play keeps nearly all pupils motivated to do well. For example, pupils enthusiastically took part in drama based on Greek legends. Teachers promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through enriching additional experiences such as a recent trip to France and by using the exceptional outside learning environment which includes an outside theatre and a castle. The very best marking provides pupils with detailed feedback and engages them in assessing how well they have done and how they could improve. A large majority of parents and carers who expressed a view in the survey said their children are taught well.

In a small number of lessons the pace of learning is slower and pupils are not clear what they are expected to learn during the lesson. Teachers do not always set clear learning objectives or check at the end of the lesson whether all pupils have met their learning intentions. Marking at times is not clear about how pupils could improve.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. Exclusions are exceptionally rare. In lessons pupils are polite and articulate and support each other well when groups have been asked to work independently. They contribute ideas and suggestions and are very willing to offer answers in feedback to teachers. Around the school pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and are very supportive towards any individual who is feeling vulnerable. They are very willing to take on additional responsibilities and they look after their school well. Pupils and many parents and carers say that behaviour has improved since the headteacher joined the school. Pupils respond well to new experiences such as their recent trip to France.

Pupils are unanimously confident that they would report incidents to teachers. They have a very high regard for all the adults who work with them. They say that they feel safe in school and that bullying and name calling are rare. Where it has happened the school has acted swiftly to deal with it and the matter has been resolved. Pupils have a clear awareness of different types of danger and bullying and what to do in such situations. Pupils' understanding of safety is enhanced by visits from the police, who come into the school to teach rugby, and take the opportunity through extra-curricular activities and assemblies to convey messages about safety to pupils.

A small minority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said there was not a good standard of behaviour at the school and that there were disruptions in lessons. A similar proportion disagreed that any incidents of bullying are dealt with well by the school. The inspector looked into their views and considered evidence from the school's records and from direct observations. Inspection findings support the views of the large majority of parents and carers that behaviour is good and that bullying is dealt with well. Attendance is improving rapidly and is now in line with the national average. Pupils have responded well to the introduction of certificates that celebrate good attendance.

Leadership and management

Many of the significant improvements in the school followed the appointment of the headteacher. She has united the staff behind her vision and drive for excellence, and has dispelled any complacency about how well pupils can achieve. She has strengthened the senior and middle leadership team to develop their roles, and some are leading by example in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in science by regularly teaching outstanding lessons. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well. The governing body have fully supported the work of the headteacher and other leaders and have developed their role in holding leaders to account through the establishment of link governors who meet regularly with leaders. The rapid improvements in all aspects of the school's work, including strengthened leadership and management, have ensured the school has a strong capacity to improve further.

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In a very short space of time rigorous tracking systems have been introduced, backed up by half-termly meetings with teachers about pupils' progress. Middle leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in leading these nor in sharing more widely the outstanding practice that already exists among them. The school tracks all aspects of school life closely to ensure it is promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. The school's systems for safeguarding its pupils meet requirements.

Regular observation and monitoring of teaching has led to improvements in its quality which in turn has led to raised achievement. Intervention and support has led to all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, rapidly closing the gap in achievement with their peers. In just one year the Early Years Foundation Stage has been transformed because leadership and management are exceptional. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a curriculum that provides a wide range of culturally enriching themes leading to pupils' good learning. Pupils develop their understanding of diversity in the wider world, for example through a project on India. Boys were particularly enthusiastic about recent work on rockets and dinosaurs.

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey said they would recommend this school to another parent. All of the staff who responded to their survey said they were proud to be a member of the school.

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.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Far Forest Lea Memorial CofE Primary School, Kidderminster, DY14 9TQ

You will know that I came to your school recently and I thought you would want to know what I have said in the report. Thank you for your welcome and I hope those of you who were chosen to visit the Queen had a good time.

You go to a good school. Since your headteacher was appointed it has rapidly improved. Your lessons have got much better and most of them are good, which means you are now doing well in your reading, writing and numeracy. Those of you who took tests at the end of Year 6 did better than most other pupils in the country. Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a flying start. Teachers plan work that is suited to your different starting points. You behave well in school and in lessons although some of your parents and carers do not agree. You have told us how behaviour has improved recently. You enjoy the practical activities that allow you to work with partners or in groups and you all get on well together. You feel safe in school and speak very highly of all the adults who work with you. Your leaders check very carefully how well you are doing and make sure those of you who need it get the right sort of additional support.

There are a few things the school should do to improve further. I have asked the school's leaders to make sure that:

- all of your lessons are at least good and more of them match those of the very best
- your written targets are clear so you understand what they mean in order that you can improve your work and know when you have achieved them
- more of your leaders are checking how well you are doing in your learning.

I hope you will all continue to do your best to make sure Far Forest becomes even better. I wish you all the best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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