

Fernhill Primary School

Field Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 9FX

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils' achievement is improving rapidly, too few pupils achieve the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2 or the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics.
- Inconsistencies in teaching mean that there is too little good or better teaching to enable achievement to rise to good.
- Teachers do not use information on what pupils already know, can do and understand consistently well enough to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils.
- The new system for teaching letters and sounds is not fully embedded.
- The new system for analysing data on pupils' attainment and progress is not fully embedded. The assessment leader does not analyse data well enough to give high-quality information to senior leaders and governors to enable school performance to be compared to all schools nationally.
- The personal, social and emotional development of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a comparative weakness.
- New subject leaders provide good guidance to improve the quality of teaching, but are not involved in checking upon the impact of their work through classroom observations.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety are good. The large majority of pupils are polite. They feel safe in school and are kept safe.
- The school is improving rapidly under the effective interim headteachers who have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Teaching in Years 2, 5 and 6 is almost always good or better.
- The quality of teaching has been strengthened by recent appointments.
- Governors have a clear succession plan to appoint a new headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven teachers and visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons, some in partnership with the two interim headteachers. Pupils were observed and spoken to at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The work of the school was observed and the inspector looked at the school's own self-evaluation and the linked school development plan, evaluated samples of pupils' work, some with the interim headteachers, and listened to pupils reading.
- Other documents looked at included curriculum planning, documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of pupil attainment and progress, including those with special educational needs, records of behaviour and records relating to the monitoring of teaching.
- There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to enable an analysis. Some parents and carers were spoken to informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspection questionnaires received from staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most schools and serves mainly the immediate area.
- The large majority of pupils are White British with fewer than average pupils from other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The most common areas of needs are speech, language and communication or behavioural, social and emotional.
- Almost all of the middle and senior management have taken up their posts in the last year, with two interim headteachers from successful local schools sharing the headship.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, in 2011. The 2012 attainment is considerably higher, but no national comparison is available yet.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the large majority of teaching is good or better in order to improve the achievement of all pupils further, especially in mathematics by:
 - making more consistent use of information on pupils' progress to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, especially those who are more able
 - improving the teaching of letters and sounds and monitoring the impact that it has upon attainment and progress in reading and writing
 - completing the review of the way mathematics is being taught to ensure that all teachers make effective use of the material available to support learning in mathematics
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that teachers include all pupils during lessons.
- Provide training in classroom observation to the English and mathematics leaders to enable them to have more ways of judging the impact of their actions to improve the quality of teaching upon pupils' achievement.
- Consolidate the changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development improves to match the provision in other areas.
- Ensure that the new system for analysing data about the attainment and progress of pupils is fully embedded and provides good-quality information to senior leaders and governors on the performance of groups and year groups compared to the national picture.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children typically start school with skills that are below those expected for their age, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication and language. Until recently, children have made expected progress in the improved Early Years Foundation Stage and their low starting points mean that many have traditionally started Year 1 with below average skills. This is now improved and the current Year 1 started with broadly average skills, although their personal, social and emotional development skills remain below that expected.
- Attainment by the age of seven has risen to average after several years when it was low, although mathematics remains a little below reading and writing. This is partly due to the effectiveness of the increased emphasis upon teaching literacy skills. Pupils, including those from ethnic minority groups, now make expected progress in all areas, but too few make better progress than expected.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 improved considerably in the last year due to the high focus upon reading and writing in the curriculum. Nevertheless, too few of the more able pupils attained the higher Level 5 in these areas. School assessments show that the current Year 6 is on track to continue the improvement in achievement and the current Year 5 has made good progress in reading and writing from starting points in Year 2.
- In the recent assessment of reading skills at age six, fewer pupils than average attained the expected standard, reflecting the previously low starting points and the fact that until recently progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has just met expectations. Reading at age seven has risen to average. Reading at age 11 is average. Although many pupils reach the expected standard, too few at either age seven or age 11 attain the higher levels and this limits their achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality additional support that they receive.
- The pupils supported through the pupil premium funding make similar progress to all pupils. The improved quality of teaching and support for these pupils in many classes enable the gap between their attainment and that of all pupils to start closing slowly.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The majority of parents and carers spoken to were happy with the quality of teaching, but a minority expressed concerns. Well-chosen appointments in the last eighteen months, some much more recently, have strengthened the quality of teaching considerably. In Years 2, 5 and 6, the quality of teaching is usually good, and sometimes better, which is why achievement is improving. Nevertheless, although the quality of teaching is improving, there are still some inconsistencies across the whole school.
- In some classes, teachers make good use of information on what pupils already know, can do and understand to plan tasks that meet the needs of all pupils and help them move on in their learning by clearly indentifying what they need to do next. Nevertheless, there are too many lessons where tasks set are aimed at the middle ability of the class and are too easy for some and too hard for others. This slows learning.
- Pupils say that marking helps them know what they need to do to improve, but this varies across the school and in some classes, especially in mathematics, marking does not make it clear enough to pupils how they can improve their work.
- In some lessons, teachers talk for too long or make too many interruptions to explain points to the whole class rather than to just one or two pupils. In these lessons, the pace is not brisk enough to ensure good learning.
- In most lessons, teachers make sure that the creative curriculum is taught effectively. More opportunities are provided to stimulate writing and this has a strong impact upon pupils'

personal development. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were motivated well when challenged to write a persuasive letter applying for a job to seek out and remove ghosts from old buildings.

- The new system for teaching letters and sounds helps improve the teaching of reading and writing, but it is not fully embedded and so its use is inconsistent.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. The teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills is now good, but the provision for children's personal, social and emotional development requires further improvement.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs receive good quality additional support in classrooms and in small groups that enables them to be fully included in lessons. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the teaching of these pupils.
- Visits and visitors used effectively to support learning. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'Viking' who visited and were stimulated to produce extended pieces of writing about the invasion of Lindisfarne. This work made a large contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils considered the impact of the invasion.
- Although many teachers ask high-quality questions that extend pupils' learning, the systems for ensuring that all pupils are questioned over a period of time are inconsistent and can lead to some pupils not making enough contribution. This slows learning and makes it difficult to ensure that every pupil's understanding has been assessed.
- Those pupils entitled to support under the pupil premium benefit from the additional training that all staff have received to support the introduction of the new system for teaching letters and sounds. They are further supported in classrooms by the increased allocation of teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- A small group of the parents who spoke to the inspector were concerned about behaviour. Pupils say that behaviour and safety over time have improved. They say that the interim headteachers have helped improve behaviour and they all understand the revised behaviour policy and what will happen if they misbehave.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of bullying and the impact of derogatory or discriminatory language, especially racist language. They say that although there is a little bullying this is dealt with quickly and they feel very safe in school. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and know about avoiding cyber bullying and unsafe sites on the internet.
- A few pupils, especially younger boys, do not have the self-control necessary to sustain good behaviour. These few pupils occasionally misbehave and cause a little disruption to lessons, but this is dealt with very quickly and fairly by adults so that the impact is slight. Pupils spoken to commented upon this but said that it did not really affect their lessons because teachers and other adults now deal with misbehaviour much more quickly and effectively.
- The vast majority of pupils behave well in all situations. Even when teaching is mundane and fails to motivate or stimulate them, very few pupils misbehave more than a little. The school is generally a calm and harmonious place.
- Attendance has improved a little in the last year and is now slightly above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The interim headteachers, working in close partnership with the local authority and the governing body, have brought new and existing staff together into an effective team with a strong ambition to improve the school further. This is a key factor in the improvements taking place.

- A minority of the parents and carers spoken to were concerned that the school does not have a full time headteacher. Governors, working closely with the local authority, have developed a clear succession plan to move from interim headteachers to a substantive headteacher as quickly as possible. To ensure continuity one of the current interim headteachers is remaining as a consultant headteacher to support the school for the rest of the academic year.
 - Observations of lessons are used effectively to identify how teaching can be improved and the local authority provides good support to enable professional development for teachers. Good use is made of visits to high-performing schools to observe examples of good practice. The classroom observations are mainly by the interim headteachers and the new subject leaders focus upon monitoring of work and teachers' planning. This limits a little the way in which subject leaders can see the effectiveness of the strategies they put in place, for example the new system for teaching letters and sounds.
 - The rich broad curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, pupils in Year 6 extended their geography work on mountains by studying books by well known climbers, such as *Touching the Void* by Joe Simpson and Simon Yates. This stimulated them to write at length about mountains and made a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they discussed the courage of these people and the hardships they endure while climbing.
 - Safeguarding meets requirements and the training of all staff and governors in this area is up to date.
 - The assessment leader does not have a secure enough understanding of how to analyse data effectively in order to monitor the progress of groups and year groups. The new computer-based system in place is used well to check on the progress of individual pupils within the school to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. Nevertheless, it is not used effectively enough to ensure that information comparing performance against other schools nationally is quickly and easily available to senior leaders and governors.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body monitors the quality of teaching and its impact on achievement through reports from the interim headteachers and through regular and frequent visits to the school. The governors ensure that additional funding available through the pupil premium is used effectively to provide training for teachers and teaching assistants on how to meet the needs of pupils requiring additional support and to provide additional support time. This is contributing well to the improvements in achievement. Governors undertake training to help them to be more effective and have identified the need for all governors to receive additional training on the use of assessment information to go alongside the new data systems. They are closely involved with the school's development planning and monitor regularly the improvements taking place.
-

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	116240
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	405632

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	148
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pablo Nayager
Headteacher	Marilyn Penman and David Collins (interim heads)
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 November 2010
Telephone number	01276 31554
Fax number	01276 33154
Email address	adminoffice@fernhill-pri.hants.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

