

# Farnworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Pitt Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 9HS

**Inspection dates** 18–19 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 throughout the school achieve consistently well. From their starting points, pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress during their time here.
- Nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is growing and compares favourably with the national picture.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good and some make outstanding progress as teaching is well matched to their learning needs.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. Pupils' attainment and progress in reading is outstanding.
- Teaching assistants are a real strength and their training has made an impact on pupils' learning.
- Pupils feel safe and behave very well as they are respectful to each other and very keen to learn. They are proud of their achievements.
- The school cares very well for all its pupils. It makes sure that every individual is fully included and has equality of opportunity regardless of background or ability.
- The headteacher has shown outstanding leadership as she is the driving force behind the constant school improvement.
- The new senior leadership team makes more rigorous checks on the quality of the teaching.
- Staff morale is very high and everyone is focused on continuing to raise standards.
- The governing body is a strength of the school as they constantly challenge and hold staff to account for pupils' progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The more-able pupils are not doing as well as they could in writing and mathematics.
- School plans for writing and mathematics do not contain relevant success criteria to regularly measure the impact of improvements.
- Teaching is good overall but there is not yet enough outstanding teaching to move the school to the next level.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons. They carried out two joint observations jointly with the headteacher and deputy head teacher. They observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) and listened to readers in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. Inspectors also observed support provided for those who have a special educational need. Inspectors looked carefully at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff, two groups of pupils, members of the shadow governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation summary and development plan; policies and procedures for safeguarding; information about attendance and behaviour; records of monitoring teaching and learning; information about pupils' achievement; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and the headteacher's reports to the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at summaries of questionnaires sent out to parents. Inspectors read and took account of a number of letters from parents. There were also 106 responses on Parent View, the online site for parents and this generated a summary of parents' views. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before the start of the school day and during the school's transition meeting into the Reception class.

## Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Diane Auton

Additional Inspector

Elaine Murray

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Farnworth CE (VC) Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school uses Oakfield Primary School and Brookfield Special School, Widnes for alternative specialist provision for pupils with special needs.
- Last year the school was governed by an interim executive board and there has been a transition to a shadow governing body who have worked closely with the local authority. The next stage is to re-constitute the governing body to take up office in September 2013.
- The school meets the government's floor standards that set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, especially for more-able pupils in writing and mathematics so that it is as strong as it is in reading by:
  - ensuring that improvement plans contain relevant success criteria so that the school can measure how well it is doing from term-to-term as it works towards its targets
  - ensuring tasks are closely matched to pupils' needs and, where appropriate, provide higher levels of challenge in order to maximise progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school with skills that are generally typical for their age. They make good progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and often achieve very well.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils have continued to make good progress and their attainment is significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading is also significantly above the national average. More-able pupils do not make as much progress in their writing and mathematics as they do in their reading.
- The proportion of pupils attaining expected levels in English and mathematics in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is very positive. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is growing and compares favourably with the national average. The school data, supported by inspection evidence, shows that the trend of improvement is set to continue.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a statement of special educational needs make good and many make outstanding progress because of the highly effective support and exemplary provision that they receive from teachers, teaching assistant and specialist support teachers. Effective links between home and school are a very important aspect in their success.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals has improved in recent years because their progress is tracked and support is closely tailored to their specific needs. This group make good progress as they travel through the school. There is no gap between the level of their attainment and that of their peers.
- The achievement of pupils accessing the alternative provision is effective as links between teachers and parents are strong. They receive specialist intensive teaching and this results in pupils making good progress.
- The headteacher has rightly focused on improving the basic skills across the school for reading, writing and mathematics. Staff is aware that they need to improve the rate of the more-able pupils' progress with writing and mathematics in every class.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of the teaching is good across the school and a small proportion is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and this helps to motivate and engage learners with relevant tasks often matched well to pupils' needs. In an outstanding Year 5 lesson, pupils were taught how to develop their writing skills and to explore ideas, to produce a podcast using imagery and onomatopoeia. Here, pupils clearly achieved and enjoyed the *'Highway Man'* poem as they were asked to read between the lines for all the hidden meanings. However, pupils' progress in some lessons is not fast enough for more-able pupils, especially in their writing.
- In Year 4, in an outstanding design and technology lesson, pupils are encouraged to assess their own success criteria. The pupils are well challenged and make outstanding progress as they design a product to match a design specification. Detailed explanations are given by the teacher to explore any misconceptions and this supports all learners very well.
- In Year 3, pupils make good progress as they develop their language skills in French when they learn to use the currency to buy vegetables by playing 'Le Juste Prix.' Pupils enjoy and achieve comparing Euro and Sterling and look for differences on the notes.
- A very small proportion of teaching requires some improvement, especially when tasks are too easy; when this happens the learning slows down for pupils in some groups especially more able ones.
- Marking is regular and very positive and next steps to help pupils' improve are included.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and well deployed. They support pupils very well, particularly for those who have a special educational need.

- In lessons and around school, good relationships exist between pupils and teachers which contribute to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection because leaders and managers check its quality regularly and use results to tailor any staff training, with a focus on successfully tackling weaker areas.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils behave well both inside and outside the classrooms. They are proud of their school and really enjoy all it has to offer. Pupils have been instrumental in drawing up the school rules and these underpin the very effective school behaviour policy.
- Attendance has always been high and continues to be so compared to the national picture. This is a real strength of the school and shows how eager pupils are to learn more.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. When teaching does not fully engage their learning, interest can wane and chatter grows but this seldom happens.
- The deputy head teacher provides very effective support for pupils' behaviour, care and welfare in her role as inclusion manager. She has recently worked with the school council to draw up the new playground rules.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare and when it does happen it is dealt with quickly by adults in the school.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know what situations might cause them harm and know how to handle or avoid them. They are generally aware of potential dangers when using the Internet.
- Pupils' good behaviour, their respect for other cultures and religions, and their equal care for those who may be different clearly shows how well the school caters for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have been well involved in producing the Christian values for the school mission statement. One pupil said, 'They are all different but they mean the same thing really. They all mean that we should be kind and look after each other.'

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The leadership of the headteacher is a strength of the school. She continually encourages the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning and includes everyone through her drive with her pastoral and teaching teams. She has successfully raised standards and accelerated pupils' progress in English and mathematics since the last inspection. The leadership of the teaching of reading and training has been successful with highly focused guided reading group work which has contributed strongly to the high standards seen in reading.
- Leaders and managers at all levels share a common vision for striving for the very best for all pupils. There is now a strong record of school improvement, which is confirmed by the acceleration of pupils' progress and the strengthening of the teaching. This clearly shows that the school has the capacity to improve even further.
- Performance management systems are good; targets are demanding and expectations have been raised. Links between the performance management and salary increases have been firmed up. The staff are aware of the link between improving outcomes for pupils and the progression of salary increase.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and rigorous and based on a secure knowledge of the school. The headteacher ensures there is thoroughness when measuring impact of pupils' progress in lessons. English and mathematics are generally well led and managed. However, improvement plans for writing and mathematics do not contain clear success criteria to enable the school to measure how well it is doing each term.
- The curriculum is creative, stimulating and enables pupils to enjoy their time at school with many visits and visitors. There is a range of activities outside the classroom that are very

popular. The school continues to work very closely with parents. Most parents are generally pleased with the education provided for children. One parent said, 'It gives me great pleasure to see the light finally shining brightly at the end of the tunnel. Seeing and hearing all the great changes makes me very happy.'

- Leaders and managers provide equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination of any kind. The school community is harmonious and the good achievement of the pupils is proof of their success.
  - Policies and procedures are all in place for safeguarding and all staff understand what they entail and carry them out in full. Training has been updated for governors and staff.
  - The local authority has provided effective support for this school with issues such as staffing and governance. It holds the school in high regard.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The shadow governing body has provided constant challenge in the quest for rigorous improvement since the last inspection. Governors continually use information to compare the school's effectiveness with that of other similar schools locally and nationally.
    - Governors know how good the teaching is and what needs to be done to improve it even further, including the importance of performance management and its link to pay. Governors take part in regular training which has prepared them well for the process of reconstitution. Link governors are working closely with classes to learn more about the curriculum provided by the school.
    - Governors have a clear overview of the school's finances, and not only ensure pupil premium funding is used appropriately but also check on its impact on the achievement of those pupils for whom it is intended.
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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111394
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	400078

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	389
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gary Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jackie Stillings
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 May 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 424 3042
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