

Farley Junior School

Northdrift Way, Luton, LU1 5JF

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough has been good or better over time to secure good learning and progress.
- Teachers do not always set work that is sufficiently demanding or encourage pupils to find things out for themselves.
- Good examples of lesson planning and marking are not shared across the school.
- Pupils are not allowed enough time to respond to teachers' comments about their work in their books and this is slowing down their progress.
- More-able boys' achievement in English and mathematics is not as good as it should be.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team has improved all aspects of the school's work including the quality and consistency of teaching and learning. This is particularly strong in Years 5 and 6.
- The staff are eager and willing to improve their practice through relevant training and in response to the advice of senior leaders.
- Pupils really enjoy school and feel safe. They behave well, are polite and show respect to each other and to adults.
- Governors are much more effective than previously and are actively involved in both supporting and holding the school to account.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 18 parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations carried out with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teaching staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and samples of pupils' work.
- The views of 13 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Also inspectors took account of 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Flesher

Additional Inspector

Susan Wood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those speaking English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is also above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for primary schools, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In April 2012 Farley Junior School was asked by the local authority to enter into a soft federation with neighbouring Hillborough Junior School – an outstanding National Teaching School.
- The executive headteacher (who is also a designated national leader), associate headteacher and assistant headteacher joined the school from Hillborough in April 2012 and in April 2013 a new assistant headteacher was also appointed to the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to make sure that all pupils make good progress by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - making sure that when teachers mark pupils' work they give clear points on how to improve it and allow pupils time in lessons to read, understand and follow the advice they are given
 - regularly using the data collected about more-able boys' achievements to plan the next steps that extend their learning and which help them to reach levels in English and mathematics that are higher than those expected for their age.
- Improve the leadership of the school by:
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice on marking and lesson planning that is already in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most pupils join the school in Year 3 with average standards and by the time they leave their standards remain average, indicating that their overall progress is not good and that the school is not adding enough value to their learning. Progress is not good because some teachers do not allow pupils to work independently for long enough. There is too much talk from the teacher which slows the pace of learning.
- During this year, however, the school has improved the organisation and use of assessment information to track the progress made by individuals and groups. This has helped identify which pupils need support and improved considerably the overall rate of progress made.
- Not enough more-able boys exceed their expected rate of progress in English and mathematics, because they have too few opportunities to solve problems involving real-life, everyday examples either in writing or in mathematics.
- The executive headteacher, associate headteacher and senior leaders are now holding teachers more rigorously to account and the help they have given teachers is starting to increase the rate of learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on solving simple equations, pupils were able to show their ability to use mathematical skills and solve problems accurately and those who found learning mathematics hard also succeeded in their task because of the effective focused support they received from teaching assistants.
- The school is making very effective use of its pupil-premium funding. Additional tuition, more focused teaching assistant time and funding for additional educational resources, for example, are helping pupils to make improved progress. In 2012, these pupils were about six months behind similar pupils and the equivalent of two terms behind their classmates. However, current school data shows that this gap is narrowing in mathematics and rapidly in English.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs reflects the inconsistencies in the progress made by all pupils. They make the best progress when adults who work alongside teachers support individual pupils using a range of approaches.
- The structure and content of pupils' writing in a range of subjects, develops well as they progress through the school. However the presentation of their work varies considerably.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies too much. Any good teaching is not sufficient to ensure that, over time, pupils make consistently good progress. In lessons that require improvement teachers do not always set work that is hard enough and expectations of how much pupils will learn are too low. Teachers often talk for too long giving pupils little opportunity to contribute or find things out for themselves.
- Not enough has been done to share across the school the examples of good teaching that is taking place in some classes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, benefit from good and outstanding teaching that inspires and motivates them so that they want to learn.

- Some teachers do not always use data about pupils' progress and performance to plan the next steps and stages for pupils to work through. This is particularly important for more-able boys to make sure they all reach levels which are higher than those expected for their age.
- Marking and feedback to pupils across the school varies and in too many lessons it does not let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Even when this is done, time is not always given for students to act on any comments made.
- Where teaching is good or better a variety of activities are planned to involve pupils in different ways and with different challenges, and regular checks are made on progress throughout the lesson. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and the pace and challenge of the work fully involves them. They are allowed to work in groups and draw on each other for support. In these lessons pupils feel they have been given responsibility for their learning and are proud of their work.
- All of this was seen in a Year 5 physical education lesson, where pupils worked in groups demonstrating excellent progress developing highly skilled batting techniques.
- There is some excellent support provided by teaching assistants, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Where this occurs, pupils make good progress. This is not the case across the whole school, and some teaching assistants are given insufficient direction from the class teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and they concentrate well in lessons. Where more-able pupils are set a challenge they rise to it. Pupils listen carefully and are eager to answer their teacher's questions. Older pupils confidently contribute to discussions.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around school, in lessons and at playtime has improved because leaders have successfully raised expectations and have succeeded in tackling a legacy of poor behaviour. Following the introduction of new policies and procedures, staff now manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- The new leadership team has also focused on improving attendance and has been successful. The three-year trend for attendance is slightly below average. At the time of the inspection attendance had risen to average because leaders have focused on families who struggle to get their children to school and to make clear the effect that absence has on their children's progress and attainment.
- Pupils say they feel safe and show a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a good knowledge of issues around internet safety and about different forms of bullying, which they say is rare and when it does occur is dealt with effectively by the school and the use of pupil peer behaviour mentors. Responses from parents who completed Parent View indicate that they think the school deals effectively with bullying when it occurs.
- Pupils conduct themselves well. They are polite and courteous to visitors. They willingly talk to adults and are honest about their feelings regarding the school. The school promotes positive relationships between pupils and they get on well together.

The leadership and management are good

- The soft federation with the neighbouring National Teaching School has worked extremely well, preventing Farley from becoming a potentially failing school, in just 15 months.
- The executive headteacher, associate headteacher and senior leaders have been determined to improve standards and make sure the majority of teaching is good or better. They have observed lessons, monitored teachers' and teaching assistants' work rigorously, and provided guidance and support where needed to reduce ineffective teaching considerably. Although leaders know that there is further to go, the proportion of lessons that are taught to a good or better standard is increasing rapidly. These are strong and skilful leaders who have kept the school on course to sustain improvements and, at the same time, have maintained staff morale.
- Staff and governors have had to learn quickly. No time has been wasted since senior leaders took over to sharpen the way pupils' progress and performance are measured (assessment information) and to establish what is and is not acceptable in lessons.
- Leaders have not done enough to share the best practice in marking and lesson planning. As a result, some students are not achieving the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The associate headteacher has considerably strengthened the way in which teachers are appraised for their performance and does not allow staff to be rewarded by increased salaries unless they are successful in helping pupils make at least good progress.
- The school has looked at the impact of the pupil premium on the progress of those who receive extra support. It has made sure that most pupils achieved good standards at the end of Year 6. This year it is funding more one-to-one tuition and small-group teaching of those pupils who are not making the progress expected of them.
- School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed and they tackle any instances of discrimination.
- The school curriculum does not fully meet the requirements of all the pupils, particularly the more-able boys. However, teachers do use a broad range of topics to make learning stimulating in a range of subjects and pupils say they find the work they are set interesting. The school provides a wide range of clubs and out of school activities
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example the school participates in 'The School' Linking Network' where a class in Year 4 link with another class in Year 4 from a school with a different cultural background.
- The local authority has supported the soft federation between the two schools very well. Support and guidance provided by consultants and advisers have been welcomed by the staff. Regular local authority reviews and feedback to senior leaders have also helped to complement leaders' own actions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body now has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Some highly skilled governors from the partner school are now members of Farley's governing body. This has strengthened governance and brought stability and added expertise. Governors have worked diligently with the school's leaders to ensure the

performance of staff is clearly linked to pay progression and management responsibilities. They know what is being done to tackle any underperformance. There is a great sense of urgency in checking the impact of the school actions on teachers' performance and pupil achievements including the impact of support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures meet all requirements.

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	109538
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	401060

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Trinder
Headteacher	John Williams (Executive Headteacher) David Bradshaw (Associate Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	04 May 2010
Telephone number	01582 725069
Fax number	01582 725069
Email address	Farley.juniors.admin@luton.gov.uk

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