

# Farnham Church of England Primary School

Farnham, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 1HR

**Inspection dates** 12–13 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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 and achievement require improvement. There is not enough good or better teaching to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well.
- Teachers' planning does not make sure activities are planned to suit the abilities of all pupils and the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow.
- During lessons, teachers do not always check to see if pupils are finding their tasks too easy or too hard.
- Teachers' marking, does not always provide pupils with clear comments on how to improve their work. Pupils are not given enough time to respond to comments written by teachers.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher and governors have secured a strong partnership between Farnham and Rickling. The very recent appointment of an assistant headteacher is already having a good impact on monitoring the work of both schools.
- Pupils behave well, are keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy the joint activities with Rickling pupils.
- The executive headteacher has driven through significant improvements which have led to improved teaching and outstanding achievement in writing for the older pupils.
- There are good signs of improvement in reading and mathematics but inconsistencies remain in the achievement of different year groups.
- Parents speak highly of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons, as well as groups of pupils working with teaching assistants. Almost all the observations and work scrutiny were undertaken jointly with either the executive headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Due to job share arrangements, during the inspection only two of the four teaching staff were observed teaching. For one of the teachers observed it was her third day in the school. Pupils' current work and work from the previous academic year was scrutinised.
- The inspector looked closely at pupils' work and heard some pupils from Year 3 read and shared books with Reception children.
- The inspection of Farnham School was carried out at the same time as the inspection of its partner school, Rickling Primary. Inspectors held joint meetings with the staff from both schools, the governing body and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector for Farnham met with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher and all the Year 6 pupils. She spoke informally with many pupils during lessons and at break times. A meeting was held with the school's education adviser.
- The inspector looked carefully at safeguarding documentation, information about pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents and development plans.
- The views of the 13 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into consideration as were the views of parents who wrote to the inspector. The inspector reviewed eight questionnaires from staff.

## Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Farnham Primary school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are no Year 1 pupils at present and numbers of pupils in other year groups are very small. In the past three years there have been more boys than girls on roll.
- There are two mixed-aged classes and each is taught by two teachers in a job share arrangement.
- The school has worked in partnership with Rickling Church of England Primary and shared an executive headteacher for some years. The schools were formally federated in January 2012. The two schools have separate budgets. They share the same governing body, executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and subject leaders. The executive headteacher and assistant headteacher spend half of the week in each school. Rickling Church of England Primary was inspected on the same two days as this school. It has a separate inspection report.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than that found nationally.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This extra funding is for looked after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and other specific groups of pupils.
- The executive headteacher has been in post for one year. In the past year there has been a change of half the teaching staff, including the assistant headteacher. An assistant headteacher, teacher and teaching assistant started at the school this term.

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

- Raise the achievement of pupils, especially those in Key Stage 1 and Reception, to a consistently good or better level by:
  - improving the quality of teaching so it is all consistent with the very best in the federation
  - always planning tasks that build on what pupils already know and are able to do
  - making precise use of the assessment of the youngest children’s capabilities so that activities and teaching maximise their progress
  - adjusting teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils during each lesson and moving them on to more demanding tasks much earlier
  - setting high expectations for pupils to work at a good rate and take care with the presentation of their work
  - improving marking so that pupils know how well they have done, what they need to do to improve and giving them the chance to respond to this in lessons and in their books.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not yet consistently good across the school.
- When children start school in Reception, their level of skills and personal development can be very wide ranging. In some years there may be just one child. The starting point of the current Reception children is broadly typical of the age group.
- Over the past three years, pupils' attainment levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are within the broadly average range. They vary considerably from year-to-year depending on the number of pupils in the year group and if there are pupils with disabilities or special educational needs in these year groups.
- The results of the 2013 national check on how well pupils in Year 1 can understand and use phonics in reading were well above average.
- In the past year, as a result of the headteacher's strong focus on improving teaching, the rate of pupils' progress has improved, most noticeably in writing. Indeed, pupils in Year 3 made two years' progress in one year, demonstrating outstanding progress.
- More able pupils make good progress and, in most year groups, exceptional progress in writing.
- Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has also improved considerably but is less consistent across the year groups. Progress for the older pupils last year was generally good, but for the younger ones it was at the expected level and requires improvement.
- The current Reception group have settled happily into school. However, not enough attention is being paid to the starting points of individuals to make sure that they make the best possible progress.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of their peers. Staff quickly note pupils' difficulties and put in support and/or seek guidance from other professionals. The school is particularly successful in the pastoral support it provides for pupils and their families.
- In each year group there are not enough pupils eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their attainment and progress without identifying them. However, the school's use of pupil premium funding has had a good impact both on pupils' progress and on their personal development.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils' rate of progress as they move through the school is not yet consistently good.
- Teachers do not always make explicit use of assessments to plan work that is suitably matched to the wide range of abilities in their class, particularly in mathematics. As a result, pupils do not

always work at the right level to secure faster rates of progress. Too often pupils of different abilities complete the same task, even though there is a wide range of abilities in each group.

- Teaching for the Reception group requires improvement. Not enough attention is being paid consistently to the individual children's starting points to make sure that the activities and teaching helps them build on what they already know and move on in their learning at a good rate.
- Work in pupils' mathematics books shows that teachers do not always effectively assess pupils' level of understanding in lessons. As a consequence, pupils are not moved on in their learning quickly enough to complete more demanding tasks. Furthermore, teachers do not mark pupils' work well enough to ensure that they have a clear understanding of how to improve. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to respond to their marking.
- Pupils' past work indicates that last year there was some good teaching of writing. Highly interesting themes were used and a wide range of different styles of writing were undertaken. However, teachers did not always set high enough expectations for the presentation and rate of work.
- Much has been achieved in strengthening the quality of teaching within the school. From her start in the school, the executive headteacher identified areas for improvement and implemented systems in both schools for holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make. For example, half termly pupil progress meetings are held with each teacher to check if pupils are making enough progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils when they have clear guidance from teachers. When this is not the case, their input is not as beneficial for pupils.

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

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, which they value highly. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of behaviour and listen carefully to what adults say. As a result, they answer questions confidently or offer sensible opinions. When the work is challenging, they work hard and take pride in completing their work to a good standard.
- Behaviour around the school is good; it is a very harmonious community where relationships are good. Pupils are polite and friendly to those they know and are welcoming to visitors. Dinner times are very social occasions.
- Pupils develop strong values and a high level of respect for others. They know how to voice their opinions and provide reasoned arguments.
- Pupils are very proud of, and highly committed to, their school community. For example, every pupil in the youngest class has a special job which they take pride in fulfilling.
- Pupils say they really enjoy the enrichment activities they undertake each week with Rickling pupils. They particularly enjoy working and undertaking sporting activities with pupils in the same year groups and eagerly await the joint residential trips.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and are well aware of safety issues when using the internet and mobile phones.

- Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, such as what is meant by cyber or racist bullying. They are confident that bullying is non-existent in their school and that, should they have concerns, any member of staff will help them.
- Attendance figures are low but it is clear that parents do not keep their children off school unnecessarily. The number on roll is small and therefore each pupil accounts for a significant number of percentage points. The executive headteacher takes a firm line and does not authorise holiday absence in term time. In the past year, the school was adversely affected by a sickness outbreak and chicken pox.

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

- The executive headteacher and governing body share a clear vision for both schools to have high standards and retain their individuality. They share a strong commitment to making sure that all groups of pupils have an equal chance to do well and that there is no discrimination.
- From her start at the school in September 2012, the executive headteacher has almost single-handedly brought about improvements in teaching through a wide range of professional development opportunities and holding teachers to account for their pupils' progress.
- The executive headteacher is managing the improvements in teaching very well. In joint observations undertaken with the inspector, both the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher demonstrated an astute understanding of what teachers needed to do to improve their practice.
- The executive headteacher has insisted on non-negotiable practices, for example tidy classrooms with good displays of pupils' work. Expectations have been raised for pupils' attainment and the pace of their learning. Teachers have been helped to improve their knowledge of how to assess pupils' level of work and how to use the school's progress tracking software to record pupils' progress.
- Teachers now have a much clearer understanding of how well their pupils are doing and what they are capable of as a result of the executive headteacher's mentoring. They are held to account for their pupils' progress at regular meetings with the executive headteacher and assistant headteacher. Pupils' progress is discussed, and agreement reached as to whether it is enough and what teachers must do to ensure more rapid progress.
- A cohesive method of teaching letters and sounds has been introduced which has ensured all teachers and teaching assistants teach these skills using the same methods. As a consequence, pupils are making improved progress in developing their skills to read and spell. Older pupils still have gaps in their knowledge of some spelling conventions but these are closing at a good rate.
- The executive headteacher has taken advantage of links with nearby schools so that staff can observe outstanding progress and for teachers to visit to provide staff with coaching to help improve their practice.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support. However, the executive headteacher has worked closely with a school education adviser and this partnership has been very effective in supporting and challenging both the executive headteacher and governors.
- There are good systems for checking on the work of the school. The executive headteacher and

the assistant headteacher have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve pupils' progress further.

- School improvement planning is comprehensive and linked to a well-planned programme of training for all staff. It includes challenging targets for pupils to meet at the end of each year. These targets are included in teachers' personal improvement plans to ensure a collective drive for improvement.
- The learning opportunities the school provides are good. These include good opportunities for pupils of the same year group in both schools to work together, and take part in joint topics and trips. The good range of relevant links made between subjects make learning exciting.
- The primary school sport funding will be used towards expanding the use of the established sports partnership with a nearby secondary school to provide even more sporting opportunities for pupils in both schools.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. For example, there are ample opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills within the school. The links with a school project in Kenya provide opportunities for pupils to compare similarities and differences in cultures.
- Links with parents are much improved. The school has a parents' forum to provide a formal way of gaining parents' and carers' views. Parents spoken with were confident that their concerns were taken note of and dealt with. The home/school diaries provide very useful guidance for parents and carers, and an easy way of promoting easy day-to-day communication.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Since the formal federation of the two schools, and the appointment of the executive headteacher, members of the governing body have made great strides in developing their roles.
  - In spite of a recent change of six governors, there is a knowledgeable core of governors who have a good understanding of what school data tells them about pupils' performance and what needs to be improved. New governors are already undertaking training to develop their skills.
  - Governors challenge the executive headteacher as to why pupils' progress is not as good as it should be.
  - Governors' knowledge of how well teachers perform has helped them ensure that they hold teachers to account. However, they have yet to check that good teaching is rewarded.
  - Governors are thorough in making sure that they perform their legal duties, including the safe recruiting and vetting of staff.

## 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>	115189
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	425239

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	29
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rebecca Martin
<b>Headteacher (Executive)</b>	Gillian Napier
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 771339
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