

Farley Junior School

Northdrift Way, Luton, LU1 5JF

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Strong leadership by senior and subject leaders has brought about considerable improvements to teaching and to pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and staff work well as a team and strive to do the very best for pupils.
- The federation works well and both schools benefit from the sharing of best practice in leadership and teaching.
- Governance provides effective support and challenge.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. As a result, pupils feel safe and well looked after by staff.
- The school is a harmonious community where cultural diversity is celebrated.
- Pupils demonstrate the qualities and values such as determination, honesty, and respect. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and the levels of challenge in the work set have been raised since the previous inspection.
- Effective marking of pupils' work and the setting of clear targets help pupils to improve.
- Teaching is now good and is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- All groups of pupils are currently making good progress in Years 3 to 6.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' improved progress over the past two years has yet to have a full impact on attainment by the end of Year 6. This is because pupils did not make enough progress in Years 3 and 4 in the past.
- In a few lessons, work does not challenge pupils of all abilities at the right level. It is too easy for some and too difficult for others.
- Pupils are not applying their writing skills enough in subjects such as geography and history.
- Opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills to solve problems in mathematics is not consistently good across the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. A few lessons were seen jointly with the senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised and the information about their attainment and progress was analysed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, representatives from the local authority, a group of governors, parents and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 18 responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View.
- Thirty seven questionnaire returns from staff were taken into account.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including school policies, safeguarding procedures and the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Michael Miller	Additional Inspector
Paula Masters	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds. About a third of the pupils are of Pakistani heritage and about a quarter are White British.
- Nearly two thirds of the pupil population speak English as an additional language and this is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- A well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- In April 2012, Farley Junior entered into a soft federation with neighbouring Hillborough Junior, an outstanding national teaching school.
- The schools have separate governing bodies.
- An executive headteacher, a national leader of education, oversees the leadership of both schools. Farley Junior school has an associate headteacher and assistant headteachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, so that more pupils make rapid progress and raise attainment by the end of Year 6, by:
 - ensuring that, in all classes, work is at the right level of difficulty for pupils of all abilities
 - build on the opportunities for pupils to apply number skills in investigations and in problem solving in mathematics
 - increase opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in subjects such as geography and history.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership has brought about good improvements since the previous inspection. The executive headteacher, the associate headteacher and other leaders have developed strong teamwork among all staff and a culture of continuous improvement. Leaders and staff show ambition and determination which helps to ensure that pupils receive good teaching and achieve well.
- The partnership between the two schools in the federation works well. Initially, Farley Junior received much support from Hillborough Junior. As Farley Junior has improved, there has been a sharing of leadership and teaching practice which has benefited both schools.
- Through regular and systematic checking, senior and subject leaders have accurately identified what the school does well and the areas in need of improvement. The findings of their self-review are used well to determine action to bring about improvement. For example, effective action has been taken to improve the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Subject leaders are experienced, well trained and qualified. The leadership of English, mathematics and special educational needs are effective. Leaders are fully engaged in checking pupils' progress and in improving their areas of responsibility.
- The improvement of teaching has been a key priority and the productive partnership with a teaching school has helped this process. Senior and subject leaders check on the quality of teaching regularly and have a clear overview of teaching across the school. Teachers have good opportunities to observe and work alongside other teachers to increase their skills. Leaders have identified areas of teaching for further improvement and are taking positive steps to tackle these.
- Arrangements for teachers' the management of teachers' performance help to improve the quality of teaching, because targets for development are closely linked to pupils' progress and to the priorities in the school improvement plan. Newly-qualified teachers receive good guidance and support from experienced colleagues.
- Effective staff selection and recruitment has contributed to the school's improvement. Leaders and governors have made some astute appointments to strengthen teaching and leadership.
- Leaders and staff place considerable attention on ensuring that pupils are safe and all safeguarding procedures meet requirements. As a result, the school is a safe place to be and pupils feel well looked after by the staff. The positive school ethos and the good relationships established contribute to the good behaviour throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength. Farley Junior is described as one school with many cultures. The cultural diversity within the school and the town of Luton are celebrated well. During the inspection, pupils were focused on practicing dance routines for their participation in the town carnival. Staff successfully promote the school's values such as determination, honesty, respect for others, passion, teamwork and self-belief. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school provides a broad and interesting range of subjects which promote pupils' good achievement and contribute well to their personal development. There have been clear improvements to the teaching of reading and writing. Opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and to solve problems in mathematics are being increased but the good practice is not consistent in all classes. Pupils enjoy the additional clubs, sport and educational visits.
- All pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided and the school effectively tackles all forms of discrimination.

- There are effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. In particular, the performance of different groups of pupils are carefully checked. This information is used well to plan teaching and to identify pupils in danger of falling behind. The school is making good progress in implementing new assessments procedures without national curriculum levels.
- The primary sports grant is used effectively to extend pupils' opportunities for sport and physical development. Teachers have received training to increase their skills in the teaching of physical education. A good range of sports clubs is provided. Pupils are actively engaged in sports clubs and tournaments which include athletics, basketball, football, netball and tag rugby.
- Pupil premium funding is well directed to provide disadvantaged pupils with additional support. A good range of strategies in literacy and numeracy are used to help those pupils in danger of falling behind. The funding and support helps to ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- The local authority has provided good advice and support on the school's journey of improvement. Regular visits are made by the school improvement adviser to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The local authority has provided an effective blend of challenge and support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is effective.
 - Members of the governing body have ambition and high expectations for the school. They support leaders well and provide appropriate challenge to hold the school to account.
 - Governors have a good understanding of pupils' attainment and progress. Governors analyse data and check that pupils' achievement is improving. They compare the school's performance with national data.
 - Governors have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. They understand requirements relating to the management of staff performance. Governors check that promotion and pay awards are based on the progress that pupils make.
 - They have ensured that effective action is taken to improve any teaching that is less than good.
 - Governors make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively and check the impact of spending on pupils' attainment and progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Leaders and staff have maintained and built on the good behaviour reported in the previous inspection report.
- Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy school. They show a keen interest in their learning and the activities provided. They informed the inspectors that 'lessons are fun' and 'there is a variety of clubs'.
- In lessons, pupils are attentive, cooperative and show positive attitudes to learning. They are well behaved in the classroom and around the school. In a few classes, especially in Year 6, pupils are fully focused on their learning and demonstrate impeccable behaviour.
- Just occasionally, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are less positive when teaching does not fully engage them and the work set is not at the right level of difficulty.
- Pupils demonstrate the qualities and values promoted by the staff. They are courteous, friendly and respectful to others. They show an appreciation and a clear understanding of different faiths. Pupils are knowledgeable about different places of worship, festivals and special rules.
- Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, being prefects, junior road safety officers or peer mentors. They raise funds for a range of local, national and international charities to help those less well off than themselves.

- Attendance has shown steady improvements and is currently average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- There is an appropriate range of safeguarding policies which are specific to Farley Junior. These give clear guidance to staff. Leaders and staff take effective steps to ensure that all pupils are well cared for and protected, particularly vulnerable pupils.
- There were no safeguarding concerns raised by parents and the pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe at school and are well looked after by staff.
- Staff have had recent training in child protection and safeguarding. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school site is a safe place where pupils can learn and thrive. Careful security checks are carried out before staff are appointed to the school.
- The school's records and discussions with pupils indicate that bullying in the school is rare. Pupils show a clear understanding of bullying and the different forms it might take, including persistent name-calling and cyber bullying. They report that should bullying occur, it is quickly dealt with by staff.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching. Teaching is now good throughout the school and this has been the key factor in raising achievement. Teaching is promoting good progress for all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous inspection have been tackled with determination and rigour. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can learn and achieve have been raised. The tasks that teachers set for pupils are more challenging and engaging.
- The marking of pupils' work has also been strengthened and is now more consistent throughout the school. Marking provides encouragement and praise for good work. Constructive comments provide the next steps to pupils' learning. Pupils are set clear and specific learning targets in writing and mathematics so they know what they are aiming for.
- Teachers establish positive relationships with pupils and create a classroom atmosphere conducive to good learning. Teachers effectively share the purpose of each lesson with the class. Pupils therefore know and understand what they are expected to learn. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to assess their own progress in lessons.
- Teachers use assessment information about pupils' attainment to plan their teaching and to help ensure that work effectively meets the needs of different abilities and groups of pupils. As a result, pupils are engaged in lessons and make good gains in their learning. However, there are occasions when work is not set at the right level of difficulty for all pupils. It can be too difficult for some and too easy for others. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they should.
- Pupils benefit from their teachers' clear explanations and instructions. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils' thinking and to check how well they have understood new learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well taught. Work and support is well suited to their needs.
- The teaching of reading has been strengthened. Teachers promote an enjoyment for reading and use a range of literature to develop pupils' reading skills. Pupils have good opportunities to examine and interrogate different texts. They apply their skills to find useful information.

- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and in different styles, particularly in English. Good attention is given to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Clear guidance and demonstration helps pupils improve their writing skills in English. However, in some classes, pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to apply and extend their writing skills in subjects such as geography and history.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Pupils are taught essential skills of calculation and the mathematical operations well. Increasing pupils' opportunities to investigate and apply skills to solve problems has been a priority. However, the practice is not consistently good in all classes and opportunities are sometimes missed for the practical application of mathematics.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils enter Year 3 with average attainment. Pupils' achievement required improvement at the time of the previous inspection because it was too varied and not enough pupils were making good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils are now making good progress. During the past two years, effective action has been taken by leaders and staff to accelerate pupils' progress. Throughout the school, different groups of pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils with English as an additional language, the most able, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are progressing well.
- Attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2014 was average in reading, writing and mathematics. While these pupils made good progress since the previous inspection, they had made too little progress in the earlier years because of past weaknesses in assessment and teaching.
- Published data indicates that some pupils made insufficient progress from Year 3 to 6. The reasons for this dip have been identified and quickly addressed so that both attainment and progress have improved sharply. Detailed information presented by the school provided firm evidence to show that all groups of pupils are now making good progress across all year groups.
- Pupils' work, assessment information and learning in lessons indicate that standards in the current Year 6 are likely to be a higher than last year. However, the improved progress is not yet having a full impact on attainment by the end of Year 6. While the current Year 6 have made good progress in Year 5 and Year 6, their progress was less strong in Years 3 and 4.
- In Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium attained higher standards than their peers in writing and mathematics and were about one term ahead. They attained similar standards to the other pupils in reading. When compared with other pupils nationally, those supported by the funding were about one term behind in reading and mathematics. They were just two months behind in writing. More recent data shows that pupils supported by the additional funding are making good progress and there are no significant differences in attainment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the work set and the support provided are well suited to their specific learning needs.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving. In summer 2014, the proportions of more-able pupils who attained the higher levels by the end of Year 6 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements to teaching mean that the most able are more effectively challenged and the proportions attaining higher levels are steadily increasing.
- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Teachers provide well-structured opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and express their ideas and opinions. Good discussion and debating skills are helping their writing.

- Pupils enjoy reading and make good progress in this area. They have acquired essential reading skills and apply these to their learning in different subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils apply more advanced skills of deduction and inference well.
- In writing, pupils are achieving well. Pupils write for a range of purposes. They are making good progress in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils in Year 3 wrote a balanced argument on the question 'Should children be allowed to eat chocolate?' They provided clear reasons for their argument such as, 'It is not good for your health but tastes delicious.' Pupils are not always applying their writing skills in other subjects such as geography and history.
- Pupils are making good progress in mathematics. They show a clear knowledge and understanding of mathematical operations. Pupils are increasingly applying their mathematical skills to investigate and to solve problems. For example, pupils in Year 6 make good progress in investigating Pythagoras theorem.

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	462083

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Trinder
Headteacher	John Williams (Executive headteacher) David Bradshaw (Associate headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2013
Telephone number	01582 725069
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