

Farcet CofE (C) Primary School

St Mary's Street, Farcet, Peterborough, PE7 3AR

Inspection dates

23–24 September 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading by the end of Key Stage 2 and in reading in Key Stage 1.
- Good teaching is not yet consistent. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the end of each key stage given the good start they get in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders have not intervened quickly enough where teaching is less than good. A number of pupils have, therefore, not made sufficient progress over a number of years.
- The school's new curriculum is at an early stage in its development. As a consequence, there is no clear information about how pupils will develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in various subjects, such as history, geography and science.

It is not yet a good school because

- The gap in achievement between pupils who are disadvantaged and the others is not closing fast enough.
- The school's plan for development is not sufficiently focused on pupils' outcomes to enable governors to effectively hold leaders to account.
- The school's chosen systems to assess where pupils are in their learning are still developing. Where teaching is not yet good, teachers therefore do not have a clear understanding about how well pupils are doing and how to check their ongoing progress.
- Leaders in English have a clear view of standards and development across the school. This is not yet consistently so in mathematics as there have been several leaders during the last year. As a result, mathematics outcomes have not been good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership team has developed clear roles and responsibilities which are directly impacting on individual pupils' outcomes and families' partnerships with the school.
- There is good teaching in some areas of the school, such as upper Key Stage 2 and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education. From low starting points, the majority make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They know how to keep themselves safe. Leaders ensure that pupils' well-being is a key priority, often going above and beyond what is absolutely necessary.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so that they are at least good in all classes by ensuring that:
 - assessment of pupils' work is accurate and ongoing so that teachers set tasks in lessons that meet the range of pupils' abilities, including the most able and the disadvantaged
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils to achieve well and challenge themselves to do even better
 - teachers provide all pupils with regular, clear guidance on how they should improve their work
 - adults use probing questions to regularly check on and further develop pupils' understanding of what they are learning.

- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the development plan for the next academic year clearly identifies expectations for success that are closely linked to pupil outcomes
 - using the example of good leadership in English to develop effective leadership in mathematics and ensure good outcomes for all pupils
 - ensuring that leaders give clear guidance as to how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding will develop in, for example, geography, history and science during their time at the school, so that middle leaders can play a more effective role in monitoring teaching in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because decisive action to improve teaching has not been rapid enough. As a result, pupils' outcomes have not been as good as they should be.
- There is a good sense of teamwork with a common purpose to ensure every pupil is very well cared for. Although the school's mantra is 'high aspirations, high expectations', there is still a tendency among the leadership team to talk about 'meeting national expectations' rather than exceeding them. Leaders recognise that making explicit these higher expectations will impact on achievement throughout the school.
- Leaders have a largely accurate view of the school's effectiveness and what needs to improve. Following the summer 2015 results, governors were involved in the formulation of the school's plan for improvement, which reflects current priorities. However, the plan is not yet tightly focused on improving all pupil outcomes. As a consequence, the part that staff play in ensuring its success is not fully effective.
- The new school curriculum provides a variety of learning themes which encompass many subjects, for example 'Peterborough at war', 'around the world' and 'going for gold'. Such themes provide good starting points for pupils to learn about the history of where they live, places beyond their local area and how they can contribute to the community in which they live. Visits complement the curriculum well and pupils write animatedly about such educational trips. Visitors to the school and a variety of after-school clubs further enhance pupils' learning. However, there is no clear guidance given by leaders about how pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding will develop in areas like geography, history and science throughout their time at the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. 'Golden rules – respect others, myself and property' are evident in each classroom and are reinforced in lessons. This term's 'values in action tree' is focused on compassion. Pupils give examples of what this means to them and how they have practised it in school.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They elect a school council and pupils apply for positions as play leaders. Pupils are also encouraged to get involved in influencing changes in the school when the headteacher holds a 'Farcet Families' meeting for everyone. As a result of one such meeting, pupils changed the way they come into school from the playground each morning. The impact has meant that pupils are calmer, more ready for school and can see how they have a say in the way their school community works.
- The school is committed to securing equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupil premium funding supports some disadvantaged pupils well. However, this is not yet the case for all. The school has employed additional adults, introduced after-school and breakfast clubs and put in place workshops for parents. As a result, the gap between these pupils' attainment and that of other pupils is narrowing, if not as rapidly as it should be.
- The additional funding for sport has been used effectively to enhance the knowledge and skills of staff and provide a specialist sports coach. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in swimming, country dancing and football.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. Leaders work tirelessly with other professionals outside the school to ensure that pupils are safe and families supported. This is particularly the case for pupils who are disadvantaged. Leaders in the school try many different ways to work with parents and are largely successful in doing so. However, there is a minority of parents of which the school is aware and with whom leaders have more work to do to gain their confidence. The school's website is currently being revised and is unavailable for parents to access. Although there are contingencies in place to enable parents to gain information through the school office, governors are aware that this lack of accessibility does not aid partnership working.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection the governing body has changed. Both the chair and vice-chair are very new in post. However, governors have continued to challenge leaders about the pupils' performance, particularly in 2015. Governors show a good knowledge of where the school is at on its journey to being a good school and recognise it still has work to do. As the governing body has restructured and appointed some new members, governors have planned a review of governance through the local authority for later in the autumn term. They have accepted external expertise from the local authority

advisers, a local leader of education and specialist teachers.

- The governing body has worked with the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that information they receive in future is more easily understood. For example, changes have been made to the way governors check on the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding. As a result, governors are challenging leaders about the impact of this funding on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors use external advice to support them in the performance management of the headteacher. They are informed about the performance of teachers and understand the link between performance targets, pupils' progress and teachers' pay.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress throughout the school and within reading, writing and mathematics.
- Planning learning which is both fun and challenging is not yet the case throughout the school. As a result pupils in these classes are not excited about what they are learning, their progress is slower and presentation of work is poor. 'I think I can, I know I can' is the mantra in Year 6, and as a consequence, pupils are eager to begin the tasks and want to achieve well.
- In some classes pupils do not always know what their next steps are or how to improve their work. In other classes, teachers use the new marking system well. They regularly mark pupils' work and give ongoing feedback, including 'green for growth', which helps pupils move on in their learning. Leaders introduced 'feedback Friday' to ensure that all pupils are given time every week to respond to marking. This is having an impact on pupils' attitudes to their learning in most classes and pupils say they find it helpful.
- Mathematics teaching remains of variable quality. For example, in some lessons, the most-able pupils were not challenged or inspired. One disengaged child told the inspector 'I did this last year and I got it then'. Some teaching in mathematics has improved recently. Where teaching was better, pupils were using a variety of methods, independently and as groups, to solve problems. The good level of discussion and challenging questions that pupils asked each other was impressive and demonstrated depth in their learning.
- In some lessons teachers do not have high expectations of pupils and do not accurately assess how well they are doing. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and upper Key Stage 2, however, use probing questioning very effectively to regularly check on pupils' progress and encourage them to think hard about what they are learning. As a result of this good subject knowledge and high expectations, teachers confidently reshape tasks to ensure pupils achieve well and fully understand new learning.
- Good planning, teaching and support helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make progress similar to their peers. The majority of teachers use teaching assistants well to encourage pupils, explain tasks and ensure they understand what to do.
- The improving teaching of phonics has led to an increase in pupils achieving what is expected of them in Year 1. It is evident that phonic skills are being used well by pupils when they read. Many activities have been designed to promote reading for pleasure, which is having a positive impact on pupils. One parent noted, 'my child is asking me to buy him books and he has never done that before'.
- The teaching of writing, which was a weaker area in the previous inspection, has improved. As a result, pupils are making expected progress. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in all classes still lags behind reading and mathematics, however. This is partly because pupils are not yet using their phonic skills well when writing.
- Classrooms are well organised and must 'invite and inspire children to learn'. The 'teaching and learning essentials pack' introduced this term is already ensuring a level of consistency within each classroom. Pupils are using the supportive prompts to help so that pupils at all ages and abilities are supported. For example, pupils were using 'rucsac' to remind them to answer and then check their answers when doing word problems in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders promptly follow up any absence, often going to considerable lengths to provide

support to families to ensure pupils' regular attendance. As a result of this and of awards within school, overall pupil attendance is improving. Lateness for some pupils has been reduced partly due to the introduction of the breakfast club, aptly named the 'Fun and Food Club' by the pupils.

- Pupils say they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Parents overwhelmingly agree that pupils are well cared for at school. That is because staff throughout provide excellent support so that pupils thrive. Individual parents took time to speak with or contact inspectors to give glowing reports on their children's progress and the school's caring ethos. One commented: 'My son has successfully moved onto his next school after he was pushed to reach his full potential with lots of encouragement, guidance and reasons to believe in himself.'
- Pupils respect those who have different opinions to their own and develop a good understanding of different cultures and traditions. They talk freely and with enthusiasm about the visits they have been on, for example to the Sikh temple.
- Pupils take on additional responsibilities; they are appointed to the school council, have roles as play leaders or have roles within classes. They carry out these duties keenly and with pride, eager to tell inspectors about the work they do 'to improve the school'.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are very well cared for. They have great confidence in the adults in the school 'to help us if we need it'. Parents are very happy with the way the school looks after their children. One parent summed up the school: 'Throughout the last seven years at Farcet, my child has found parts of it a bit tricky and challenging. But through support, he now knows he just has to try his best.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour in the school's behaviour policy and respond well to it. As a result, school records show that incidents are rare and dealt with promptly should they occur. A minority of pupils whose behaviour has previously been challenging have shown marked improvements. This is partly because the school has invested in additional staff to support these pupils, such as the family link worker and school counsellor.
- Pupils conduct themselves well when in lessons and engage in healthy competition where the activities allow. In one lesson, pupils were set a challenge to 'spend' an exact amount of money they had 'won'. Each pupil was keen to be the first to get to zero by selecting various items from a list. But if they heard another pupil in the group struggling, they readily supported them.
- Occasionally, some pupils become distracted in lessons. At these times, their progress slows and they do not listen as well as they should. In other lessons, pupils listen to teachers and adults and generally respond to instructions quickly and with enthusiasm.
- Pupils play happily together in the playground and are friendly towards others. They are 'proud to be play leaders' and help to ensure that all pupils are enjoying their free time and 'are not feeling left out'.
- In recent years there have been no serious incidents of bullying or racism and exclusions are rare. Staff keep comprehensive records of minor misdemeanours and pupils say any incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Pupils know about, and articulate well, different types of bullying. The list given by a range of pupils during a meeting was comprehensive and included physical, verbal, cyber and social media bullying. They know who to go to if they are worried or upset about something but firstly follow the school's guidance on 'telling the bully to stop'.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because too few pupils in 2015 made good progress in mathematics and reading by the end of Key Stage 2 and in reading in Key Stage 1.
- Some classes of pupils have had teaching that is not good enough for a number of years. As a result, their progress has been slow. Leaders have not intervened quickly enough. Consequently, pupils entering Years 5 and 6 have had considerable gaps in their knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics.
- The school's own assessment information shows a varying picture in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in reading and writing. Current information suggests that mathematics achievement is improving and becoming more consistent throughout the school.

- In 2015, achievement of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium was below that of their peers. A significant proportion of these pupils had additional needs and many joined the school at different times during the year. Current information suggests that this group's progress compares favourably to that of their classmates. The gap between this group and their peers nationally is closing, but not quickly enough. This is as a result of poorer teaching in some year groups.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has not been good enough, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is because the work that teachers give pupils is not always challenging enough and teachers have not had consistently high expectations. There is, however, a higher proportion of pupils currently in the school who are on track to achieve higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2016.
- Children's attainment on entry to the school is typically below that expected for their age but they make good progress during their time in the Reception class. In 2015, a large majority of children reached a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In the 2015 phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard was above average. This has consistently improved over the last three years. Pupils use their phonics skills well when attempting unfamiliar words.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Progress from their varying starting points compares favourably with that of their classmates. This is because they are given targeted support in the classroom, which pupils say helps them with their work.

Early years provision

is good

- Children settle well, quickly become self-confident and leave the Early Years Foundation Stage well prepared for Year 1. Children make good progress in literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.
- All adults have high expectations of the children. They are passionate about giving children the very best start to their education. Leaders liaise well with the on-site pre-school provision to ensure that children's learning builds from their individual starting points.
- Teaching is good. As a result the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased, and in 2015 is above the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Transition arrangements between home and school are very effective. During a very well planned snack time, the children were talking about what keeps them healthy, and in particular exercise. Speaking to one child the teacher said 'your mummy told me you go to a swimming club after school to give you exercise', which clearly delighted the child.
- Child protection and safeguarding are good. There are no breaches of welfare arrangements. Adults are very attentive to the children's needs at all times and, for so early in the school year, have already developed a very good relationship with the children.
- Parents are involved in their children's learning. Leaders encourage face-to-face contributions from parents, who like the 'wow cards' which celebrate their children's achievements. This effective partnership helps staff discover the children's individual needs and plan very effectively for them, as can be seen in children's individual learning journals.

School details

Unique reference number	110811
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10001958

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Atwere
Headteacher	Nathaniel Robinson
Telephone number	01733 240337
Website	www.farcet.cambs.sch.uk
Email address	office@farcet.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 October 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The remaining pupils come from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium (which is additional government funding used to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- In 2015, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes in teaching and support staff. Responsibility for leading mathematics has also changed. The governing body is in the process of appointing a new chair and vice-chair.
- The school shares the site with the local authority run pre-school which is situated within the SureStart Children's Centre. Neither formed part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher or a senior leader. In addition, the inspector and headteacher made a number of shorter visits to lessons and attended an assembly.
- The inspector heard some pupils read from Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leaders, staff, three members of the governing body, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- The inspector examined a range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, the systems to track pupils' progress, policies and records relating to behaviour and attendance. She also looked at records of the monitoring of teaching by senior staff, performance management information, safeguarding documentation, reports from external personnel and samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector analysed returned questionnaires from 15 staff.
- The Parent View online survey responses of 22 parents were taken into account, as were letters from parents and the views they gave to the inspector at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Ruth Brock, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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