

Farley Hill Primary School

Church Road, Farley Hill, Reading, Berkshire RG7 1UB

Inspection dates

10–11 May 2016

Overall effectiveness

Good

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- 'This school has come on in leaps and bounds since the last inspection,' was how one parent put it. Inspectors agree.
- Standards in English and mathematics are much higher than they were previously because leaders and teachers have lifted the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning have transformed. They are excellent ambassadors for the school.
- Across all classes, pupils enjoy school and rarely miss it for any reason.
- The headteacher is a passionate educator. She is very clear about how improvements can still be made and why. She has earned the confidence of pupils, parents, staff and governors, who are overwhelmingly positive about the school.
- The knowledgeable, enthusiastic and effective team of teachers make the pupils work hard. They are keen to find ways that they can improve and make the school even better.
- Children are quickly fired up by the rich experiences in the excellent early years provision. They make significant strides in their learning.
- Pupils gain a genuine love of books and make excellent progress with their reading.
- Pupils that fall behind their peers catch up quickly. The number of most-able pupils that do better than other pupils their age nationally has grown.
- Pupils are highly respectful of each other and report that they feel safe in school. They develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using electronic devices and the internet.
- Staff provide pupils with a wealth of rich and varied learning experiences. Teachers take care to make learning meaningful to pupils' lives and experiences.
- Governance is effective and has improved markedly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good, some teachers are not as highly skilled as others.
- Leaders' checks of individual pupils' outcomes are not used sharply enough to analyse how well different groups of pupils are doing and to measure how well actions to promote improvement are working.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching across subjects by extending the opportunities to share the best practice that exists within the school.
- Use a concise and effective way of drawing together the school's assessment information to show clearly how well different groups of pupils in the school are doing relative to their starting points across subjects, including the most able.
- Use the analysis of how well different groups of pupils are doing to:
 - include measures and milestones of what leaders and governors are seeking to improve and by how much in the school action plan
 - measure how well any action taken has worked.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- With calm, confident and determined leadership, the experienced headteacher has established a very strong learning culture at Farley Hill. Pupils, parents, staff, governors and the local authority have noticed the difference and are united in their agreement that it is a change for the better.
- Across all key areas, there is a compelling trend of improvement since the previous inspection. A determination not to 'chase results' but build firm foundations for the future has paid off. For example, the strong push to improve pupils' attitudes to learning has transformed pupils' personal development. In turn, this has helped them to learn much better and, as a result, standards have risen securely.
- The inspirational headteacher articulates clear and convincing reasons for the decisions that have been made. The staff have full confidence in her stewardship and work tirelessly to implement whatever the team has agreed. This means that improvements last and become part of routine practice.
- Varied training and opportunities to observe other teaching within and beyond the school have contributed well to the significant improvements in the quality of teaching. The headteacher does not shy away from difficult conversations in her desire to get the best for pupils. Teachers are reflective and keen to find out how they can hone their skills even more. The headteacher has rightly identified scope to build on the existing opportunities to share the excellent practice in the relentless drive to make outstanding teaching the typical experience for all pupils.
- Leaders and staff hold a wealth of knowledge and information about each individual pupil and how well they are doing. They make good use of this to tackle any sign of underachievement rapidly. Teachers and the special educational needs coordinator use this information very well to find the right ways to support individual pupils. Where a pupil needs a particular package of extra support, they check carefully that this works in a timely way, including provision that makes use of the small allocation of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- Following changes nationally to the way schools assess pupils, like many, leaders are still searching for effective ways to track and analyse patterns across the school. At present, there is not a clear and concise overview of how well all groups in the school are doing compared to their starting points, for example, the most able. Without this, measures in the school's action plan that leaders and governors can use to check the impact of the actions taken are not as sharp as they could be.
- The rich learning experiences across a wide range of subjects capture pupils' imaginations, for example, making potions to learn about conversion of measurements. There are strong links between subjects which help learning to make sense. Pupils of all ages readily recall and make use of what they have learned. Year 4 pupils used their mathematical knowledge and previous experience making three-dimensional maps when designing tiles inspired by the Spanish architect, Gaudi.
- A strong emphasis on safe and healthy living and relationships ensures that pupils' personal development is especially strong. The picture of life for pupils at Farley Hill that inspectors found was summed up succinctly by a comment from a parent: 'I feel they receive a very well rounded education.'
- A diverse and plentiful range of trips, extra-curricular activities and music, art and physical education opportunities contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Thoughtful and planned use of additional sports premium funding has led to an increase in both the range and uptake of sporting events. Pupils have a keen sense of responsibility, respect and tolerance. The school's ethos is entirely consistent with fundamental British values. The significant strengths in pupils' personal development and above-average academic standards prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education.
- Subject leaders have contributed well to improvements. They check how well their particular subjects are going in a variety of ways, but make particularly effective use of pupils' views alongside their own evaluations.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A number recognise that there are areas that the school is still trying to improve but are confident that this will happen. A few parents commented that they would like more information about how well their children are doing, particularly during parents evenings, while others particularly praised this aspect.
- An increased level of support from the local authority following the previous inspection quickly reduced, recognising the capacity to do what was necessary existed within the school. The headteacher values the ongoing challenge and support, but this is at an appropriately 'light-touch' level.
- Although ambitious, leaders are also realistic about where the school is on its journey to get the school

where they want it to be. They are rightly proud of how far they have come, but constantly have an eye to what they need to work on next.

■ **The governance of the school**

- Governors are aspirational and committed wholeheartedly to the work of the school. Improvements in the governing body's own effectiveness have mirrored and supported those in the school itself. Governors have placed a strong and successful emphasis on training and acting on the recommendations of the external review.
- Governors ask searching questions of leaders to challenge their assertions about how well the school is doing. Subject leaders regularly report to the governing body in person to present information and answer questions. Governors also make good use of their regular visits to inform their knowledge and understanding of improvements that the school is making.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Safeguarding is given a high priority at all levels and there is a strong awareness that, 'safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.' Staff are vigilant and follow the simple but effective procedures for recording and reporting any concerns. Leaders show persistence in following up relevant concerns with other professionals and agencies where necessary. Governors test out the impact of staff training by questioning staff on policies and procedures during visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers are knowledgeable, passionate and enthusiastic in their teaching, captivating pupils who are, in turn, excited to learn. The lively and purposeful atmosphere that this creates is enhanced by the vibrant and stimulating learning environment that the staff team have created.
- The quality of feedback is a particularly noteworthy strength across the school. It is having a significant impact on progress, especially in English and mathematics. This is because pupils understand how to use the precise feedback they receive to improve their work. Not only are teachers excellent role models for giving feedback, both verbal and written, but they also train pupils to give thoughtful and helpful pointers to each other. Pupils value all of this help and use it wisely.
- Probing questioning encourages pupils to extend their thinking and develop their answers. Pupils routinely offer well-reasoned explanations as part of their answers. Teachers do not always accept pupils' first answer. They skilfully use their knowledge of individual pupils to target their questions and make sure that even the most able are made to think deeply.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and pupils relish this challenge. As well as focusing on subject content, the school takes time to teach pupils about the learning process and give them the vocabulary and language for these reflections. For example, pupils frequently talk about 'being in the pit of learning' where they might struggle to know what to do or have to wrestle with a new concept.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. In lessons, this appears seamless, with both providing additional support for pupils who have special educational needs, for example.
- Teachers find meaningful ways to point out links with things pupils have learned previously in the same or different subjects. This helps pupils to join up what they learn, making it more memorable. Pupils readily recall their previous learning and use it when tackling new work.
- Pupils are very clear about what they are aiming for, because teachers model well for them 'what a good one looks like', known as 'WAGOLL'. From the youngest children upwards, pupils know, understand and can explain the next steps they need to take to improve their work.
- While there is some excellent practice over time, especially in the early years and within key stage 2, some teachers do not help some pupils make the same exceptional progress across subjects achieved by others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning mean that they are now unrecognisable from those described in the previous report. They are confident, articulate and self-assured but polite and friendly. This balance and

humility shows a considerable amount of self-awareness relative to their ages. They rightly convey a strong sense of pride in their school.

- The mutual respect between pupils is a striking feature of Farley Hill. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning because pupils collaborate so effectively and take time to listen to others' ideas. The frequent opportunities to review each other's work and suggest improvements work so well because, as one Year 4 girl put it, 'You can trust everyone here.'
- Pupils are confident to make and learn from their mistakes. Most-able pupils do not worry about 'being in the pit' sometimes and feel motivated and challenged by the tasks that they are set.
- There is an extensive range of leadership opportunities within school, from checking the list of who has picked which option for dinner to being a reading buddy for a younger pupil. Pupils rise to these roles with a keen sense of responsibility and others look up to them. They convey no hesitation in turning to the Year 5 peer mediators to help them resolve any issues at breaktimes. Training for peer mediators is exceptionally effective. They have an acute understanding of the safeguarding elements of their role and at what point they must pass concerns to an adult.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and their parents agree. Typical of the school's commitment to safeguarding its pupils, risk assessments identify that teaching pupils how to keep safe when using the internet is a particular priority due to the number of personal devices pupils own. Pupils have a refined knowledge of how to manage risk in a range of activities, from playing near nettles in the copse to keeping safe on the road.
- Most pupils have no awareness of bullying at the school. They have an in-depth understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including more subtle forms such as persistently and deliberately excluding another pupil from a game. The range of inspection evidence indicates that incidences of bullying are rare and the overwhelming majority of pupils and parents are confident that the school deals with it well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- When switching from one task to another, pupils are adept at adapting their behaviour according to the nature of the task. They focus attentively when it is time to listen to the teacher or each other, engage enthusiastically when working with a peer or group and apply themselves industriously when working independently.
- No time is wasted in lessons. For example, when pupils needed to clear their tables and set up for an art activity, they knew exactly what to do without being told.
- Throughout the school day, adults' supervision is unobtrusive because pupils are able to regulate their own behaviour. Pupils understand and respect why things are as they are and so there is not an undue emphasis placed on simply following rules. For example, pupils help themselves to the imaginative and varied range of equipment available outside and willingly limit their use to the relevant zone in the interests of other pupils' safety.
- Throughout the day the atmosphere remains positive, purposeful and vibrant, including during the wet lunchtime observed during the inspection. Pupils socialise happily over lunch in the attractive and comfortable 'Eat Smart Café'.
- Attendance levels are consistently above national averages. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their experience at school and are very keen to get the attendance awards. The school carefully compares the attendance of different groups within the school. In the current year to date, attendance of pupils who have special educational needs is especially high, bucking the national trend.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- On entering each class, any visitor to the school is welcomed by a pair of 'learning monitors'. From early years up, these pupils explain clearly and articulately what is happening in their class at that moment and, more importantly, what they are learning. This routine is typical of the trust and confidence between the adults and pupils. The clarity conveyed by these 'learning monitors' represents the consistent picture among other pupils too.
- Standards in English and mathematics are significantly higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Children start school with varying skills, knowledge and understanding, but broadly in line with expected levels overall. Recent Year 6 leavers have attained levels significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Pupils' outcomes in reading are outstanding. In this literacy-rich environment, pupils develop a genuine love of books. They make excellent progress and reach high standards in reading by the time that they leave. Younger pupils are rapidly equipped with the technical skills they need to decode print, such as the knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). Results of the Year 1 phonics screening check have been well above the national average over time.
- At any stage across the school, pupils that have fallen behind are targeted with the necessary support to catch up quickly. Teachers' careful checking of pupils' learning during lessons mean that this support is often immediate, getting pupils quickly back on track.
- The most-able pupils make good progress and achieve well. They are motivated and regularly feel challenged in lessons. The quality of the work in their books is distinguishable from others, especially in English and mathematics. Most-able pupils report that they are most often 'in the pit' during literacy lessons. In recent years, most pupils have reached above-average standards in reading by the time they leave. Current most-able writers demonstrate flair and technical accuracy in their writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because they receive appropriate personalised support. Often this is a balance of working unaided or with a peer, working with additional support from a teacher or teaching assistant, or through specific additional help sessions focused on a particular aspect of learning.
- Pupils regularly apply their skills through a range of subjects. Work in books shows that pupils' progress in subjects other than English and mathematics is more variable across the school.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Being immersed in the environment of the early years provision, both inside and out, it is easy to see why the children are so inspired and engaged in their learning.
- From the tadpoles to the hatching chicks and from the photographs of the Shakespeare workshop to the painting and creative areas, the environment is festooned with evidence of children's high-quality learning. In particular, opportunities for children to develop their literacy, numeracy and understanding of the world radiate from the environment.
- Children are immensely proud of their achievements. As with classes in the rest of the school, both the 'learning monitors' and other pupils can give detailed explanations of what they have learned. For example, how their butterfly patterns demonstrate their understanding of mathematical symmetry, trying hard to pronounce the word 'metamorphosis' while describing its life cycle. Some are incredibly articulate in pointing out the finer points which demonstrate the depth of their understanding.
- Every area, inside and out, is adorned with the children's writing and labels. The quality of their writing is well beyond that typically seen in the early years.
- Systematic phonics teaching helps the children to master these skills. They quickly gain the confidence to use their rapidly growing phonic knowledge to read and write because they are provided with plentiful opportunities to do both.
- Children's individual needs are very well met in this inclusive environment. Their excellent engagement with the wide range of activities, conduct and confidence demonstrates how safe and secure they feel.
- Expectations of all children are high. Those that are not quite working at the levels expected for their age are given the right experiences and support to help them catch up quickly. Links are made with other professionals to support pupils with particular needs, such as speech and language therapy. This early intervention often means that there is no need for this additional support further up the school.
- There is plentiful stretch and challenge for the most-able children. The assessment of children's learning is accurate and precise and each individual's progress is meticulously tracked. Those already demonstrating that they have met the expectations for the end of the early years provision (early learning goals) are targeted to move their skills beyond. In this way, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the rigours of the Year 1 curriculum. Almost all children reach at least the level expected nationally by the end of Reception Year, well above national figures.
- Ably supported by the teaching assistant, the expert teaching of the reception class teacher and early years leader ensures that every learning opportunity is seized. She is strongly focused on what she wants the children to learn. She checks children's understanding of concepts thoroughly through careful questioning and providing plentiful opportunities for them to show what they have learned.
- The local authority makes use of the provision as a 'reference site' for other schools to see best practice. Rightly so. The early years leader remains modest and conveys no sense of complacency. Constantly

seeking ways to improve, this year there has been a focus on improving children's expressive arts and design outcomes. One boy carefully explained to another how to paint a flower, demonstrating a good foundation for the feedback skills developed in the rest of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	109829
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10009208

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colleen Knox
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Emma Clarke
Telephone number	01189 732148
Website	www.farleyhillprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@farleyhill.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- Farley Hill is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. This is additional funding allocated for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs or disability is much lower than the national average.
- The school operates a before school 'drop-off' club for pupils. The on-site after-school provision is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all seven classes during the inspection to gather evidence about what teaching and learning is typically like at this school. They observed parts of lessons, but paid particular attention to their discussions with pupils and the quality of their work over time in books and on display.
- They spoke with a wide range of people to find out their views and experiences of the school, including pupils, parents, staff, leaders, governors and the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed 67 anonymous online questionnaires from pupils, 21 from staff and 91 responses to the online survey Parent View. A large number of parents added comments and the inspection team received a letter from a parent. They considered all of these alongside other inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school throughout the day and sampled a range of their documentation. This included the school's own evaluations of how well it is doing, information about how pupils' outcomes and records and documents related to the safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Clive Dunn, lead inspector
Joyce Lydford

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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