

Farley Junior School

Northdrift Way, Luton, Bedfordshire LU1 5JF

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors have not acted quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching when, over time, pupils' progress slowed.
- The achievement of pupils is too uneven across year groups. Standards are too low in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and do not yet take a full part in leading improvements within their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders do not routinely review the support programmes in place for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, to ensure that these pupils make consistently strong progress in all year groups.
- There is too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some classes.
- Leaders have not carefully checked that the new strategies to improve teaching have been used consistently and successfully by teachers across all classes.
- Teachers do not use assessment information consistently well to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities and needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not consistently achieve as well as they should. This is because, until recently, suitable support had not been in place to meet their needs and help accelerate their progress.
- Some of the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to enable them to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and at breaktimes is not consistently good.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders, staff and governors are ambitious for all pupils. They recognise how urgent it is for the school to improve.
- Positive developments in teaching and recent assessment information indicate that senior leaders have the capacity to secure further improvement.
- Pupils' personal development is good. The school's inclusive approach and the wide range of experiences provided inspire pupils to be the best that they can be and equip them well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding to good effect.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - the pupil premium funding builds on recent improvements so that disadvantaged pupils across the school make consistent and more accelerated progress in English and mathematics
 - the support programmes for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are monitored regularly to check that they are maximising the progress that these pupils make
 - leaders closely check and evaluate the effectiveness of new strategies that have been introduced to help pupils make faster progress
 - the skills and confidence of middle leaders are quickly developed so that they can improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in their areas of responsibility
 - the strongest practice evident in teaching and learning is shared more widely across the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - assessment procedures are sharpened so that staff consistently use their knowledge of what pupils know and can do to plan lessons that meet pupils' learning needs
 - the most able pupils are consistently set work which challenges and stretches them.
- Ensure that all staff consistently apply the school's agreed standards of behaviour and routines during lessons and at breaktimes so that pupils are more engaged in their learning and play positively together.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the school has maintained the good performance identified at the previous inspection. In 2016 and 2017, leaders, including governors, focused on improving pupils' behaviour but did not take appropriate action to address weak teaching. Inconsistent teaching and the significant number of staff changes disrupted pupils' learning in some classes. This resulted in pupils making insufficient progress as they moved through the school, and in standards of attainment falling well below national averages by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders have recognised the urgent need to strengthen leadership at all levels. Until recently, the capacity to bring about rapid and sustained improvement was limited, as the headteacher and deputy headteacher were trying to undertake too many roles of responsibility. The expansion of the leadership team through the appointment of two assistant headteachers is enabling the senior leadership team to use their particular strengths well, share the workload and quickly drive improvements forward. These changes are beginning to have a positive impact in many different areas, including the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders have introduced a large number of strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. For example, they have improved the accuracy of assessing pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, and they have tightened up the way in which pupils' progress is monitored and tracked. As a result, leaders can clearly demonstrate that pupils are making better progress this year. Nevertheless, leaders have not consistently checked the impact of these different strategies in all classes across the school. Consequently, leaders are unsure of the precise effect of each strategy that they have introduced.
- Senior leaders with responsibility for improving teaching in English and mathematics are becoming increasingly adept at improving standards of teaching in their areas. Their actions have had a clear impact on accelerating the amount of progress that pupils make. Middle leaders with responsibility for other subjects have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced, and well supported by a range of experiences and events that enrich pupils' learning. However, they have not yet received the training and support necessary for them to make significant and sustained improvements to teaching and outcomes in their areas of responsibility.
- Over time, governors have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been spent effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes have been well below those of other pupils nationally. Having recognised this, governors are taking action and have recently commissioned an external consultant to conduct a review of the school's spending decisions. Although the outcome of this review is not yet known, there is already a stronger focus on ensuring that disadvantaged pupils make the progress required to attain as well as other pupils nationally. Leaders are ensuring that funding is better used to eradicate any gaps in the knowledge and skills of disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know that there is still work to do to ensure that chosen approaches are effective and that these pupils make consistently strong progress across the school.

- Historically, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have not been supported effectively, and their needs have not always been met. The inclusion coordinator has now established clear procedures to identify the needs of these pupils. As a result, a range of support has been put in place and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have started to make quicker progress. However, although the provision for these pupils is improving, leaders do not routinely review the support programmes provided to ensure that these are working well and enable pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Parents are largely supportive of the school, and most share the view that the school has improved more recently. However, a few parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and about inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. Together, they have shown considerable determination in raising the expectations of staff and pupils. Leaders have a clear understanding of the improvements needed and have a shared vision for pupils to achieve the best that they possibly can. They have strengthened the school's safeguarding culture and engineered significant improvements to pupils' behaviour. These developments are welcomed and appreciated by staff, pupils and parents.
- The school's additional funding for PE and sport is particularly well used to support the development of PE teaching and widen pupils' opportunities to engage in sporting activities. As a result, there has been a marked increase in the proportion of pupils taking part in both physical activity and inter-school competitions. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the wide variety of sports provided for them.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. Enrichment activities, trips, events and extra-curricular clubs complement this. Staff ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is particularly effective. The school, therefore, prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain.
- The local authority has provided effective challenge and support for the school. For example, specialist advisers have given guidance to leaders in order to raise standards in English and mathematics.

Governance of the school

- Governors are aware that, over time, they have not held leaders securely to account for the school's performance. They did not seek or receive enough information about the quality of teaching across the school or challenge the achievement of different pupil groups strongly enough when standards dipped.
- Decisive action has been taken by the governing body to strengthen their roles and ensure that they carry out their responsibilities effectively. Governors have restructured their committees to make sure that these roles and responsibilities now focus particularly on monitoring teaching and pupils' progress across the school. They have also undertaken an audit of their skills and expertise to ensure that they can effectively support and challenge leaders to improve all aspects of the school.
- Regular visits are carried out by governors to find out, first-hand, about the school's

work. As a result, the governing body now understands the needs of the school well. Governors' minutes of recent meetings show that they increasingly provide effective support for school leaders. They ask probing questions and ensure that they receive detailed answers to enable them to hold leaders to account.

- Governors carry out their statutory duties rigorously, including in relation to safeguarding. They have recently begun to ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium funding, is deployed appropriately, for example to overcome barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all statutory requirements, including checks on staff before they start working at the school, are fully met. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school, led by the headteacher, and key personnel, such as the business manager, and the school's family workers. Annual training for all staff ensures that safeguarding training requirements are fully met. Staff also receive regular updates to keep them abreast of any changes in statutory guidance.
- Leaders ensure that staff are trained in the 'Prevent' duty to keep pupils safe from risk of radicalisation and extremism. Staff are alert to signs that pupils could be at risk and report these to the appropriate agencies and authorities.
- The school works effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. When needed, they challenge external agencies so that pupils and their families receive the support that they need, and in a timely manner.
- The majority of parents recognise and appreciate that the school places a high priority on maintaining pupils' safety and care.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching over time has not been effective enough to enable pupils across the school to make consistently good progress. As a result, across the year groups, too many pupils do not reach or exceed the standards that are expected for their age.
- Some teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour are not high enough. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they should. In some cases, teachers are slow to re-engage pupils who lose concentration during lessons.
- Senior leaders have implemented a range of strategies to improve teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. They have also strengthened systems for assessing what pupils have learned. As a result, teaching is now better planned, and it is beginning to meet pupils' needs more closely. However, the most able pupils are not consistently given tasks that challenge them and deepen their thinking. Some teachers do not expect enough from most-able pupils. Consequently, this limits their progress and these pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Despite recent improvements, the quality of teaching remains too variable. Some

teachers have quickly and effectively put in place the new approaches that have been introduced by leaders. However, other teachers are taking longer to ensure that new approaches effectively meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, teaching is not strong enough to ensure that all groups across the school learn equally well, particularly disadvantaged pupils, the most able and, in the past, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Variations in the quality of teaching between different classes and year groups mean that some pupils make better progress than others.

- Leaders have prioritised making improvements to the way that reading is taught and promoted throughout the school. For example, they have introduced a new approach to developing pupils' reading skills, which ensures that pupils learn key vocabulary, complete regular comprehension activities and are encouraged to develop a deeper appreciation of the texts that they read. Following training, teachers are gaining confidence in asking pupils different types of comprehension questions. Where teachers are using these new strategies effectively, the teaching of reading is improving, and pupils are making faster progress in this area.
- Special events, such as performing classic poems during the 'Great Farley Poetry Busk' and taking part in termly reading challenges to earn bronze, silver and gold badges, engage pupils and motivate them to develop a love of reading.
- Recent developments in the teaching of writing are beginning to improve pupils' written work. Where teaching is strongest, pupils' writing skills are being developed effectively both in English lessons and across the wider curriculum. However, pupils' written work varies too widely in quality and content in different classes across the school.
- Leaders have introduced changes that have improved the way that mathematics is taught. In particular, teachers are beginning to prioritise the development of pupils' mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, this is still at an early stage and is not embedded across all classes within the school.
- An increasing range of small-group interventions is helping some pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities and the disadvantaged, to catch up when additional support is needed. As a result, leaders and staff are becoming more adept at helping those who fall behind, and this is increasing the proportion of pupils who are working at standards that are typical for their age.
- The work in most pupils' books shows that they adhere to the school's high standards for handwriting and presentation. The majority of pupils take pride and sufficient care when completing their tasks and, as a result, their work is tidy and well presented.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The attention given to raising pupils' aspirations and preparing them for adult life is a notable feature of the school. The school has developed several positive links with successful secondary schools and local businesses. Staff organise a well-thought-out programme of experiences and events where pupils learn about many different professions, higher education and career opportunities. Pupils consider the skills that

they need to be successful in their chosen career and the manageable steps required to achieve their goals. Staff help pupils to consider their future careers in constructive ways so that they feel good about themselves, life and learning.

- Pupils know and understand the 'Farley values' of unity, respect, integrity, resilience, responsibility and happiness. They told inspectors that such qualities will enable them to become caring and responsible adults in the future. Pupils commented that living out the school's values is important as they: 'Help us to be the best we can be and they get us ready for life.'
- Older pupils enjoy making a contribution to the school through additional roles, such as house captains, play leaders and eco warrior representatives, alongside looking after younger pupils so that they all 'grow up to be good citizens'. They say that they value these roles and can explain the importance of representing other pupils. Pupils understand that these roles develop their own confidence and organisational skills.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Pupils clearly explained how they make sure that they keep themselves safe from strangers and when they are using the internet. They know which adults to talk to should they have a concern or a worry. Pupils also told inspectors that there is very little bullying in the school. If bullying does happen, then pupils are confident the adults will sort it out quickly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour varies between classes according to the quality of teaching. While pupils behave well in most lessons, there is too much low-level disruption in others. As a result, some pupils reported regular disturbances to their learning.
- Most pupils behave considerately in the playground. However, the rough behaviour of a small number of pupils detracts from the enjoyment of playtime for others.
- Many parents are happy with the quality of behaviour in the school and reported significant improvement recently. However, a few expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour in lessons and during playtimes. Parents' mixed views reflect differences in the quality of pupils' behaviour across the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved in the last year. School records and observations during the inspection support this view. Equally, there has been a noticeable drop in incidents logged by school staff and the number of fixed-term exclusions since the changes to the school's behaviour policy took effect.
- Most pupils get on well together. Their positive attitudes to school and their considerate behaviour towards each other make a valuable contribution to their learning and to the school's generally calm, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils behave well in the dining hall. They enjoy chatting with friends while they eat their lunch. They speak to adults politely and follow their requests promptly.
- Leaders have worked hard to promote the importance of good attendance with pupils and their families. Staff closely monitor why pupils are absent and follow up concerns with parents quickly. Leaders work closely with other external agencies, such as the education welfare officer, to ensure that any attendance concerns are addressed. As a result, attendance rates are improving and are now close to the national average. The

proportion of pupils who regularly miss school is also reducing and, although still high, is moving nearer to national figures.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils have not made good progress from their starting points. This is because the quality of teaching has varied across the school and teaching has not consistently met pupils' differing needs. In 2016 and 2017, standards at the end of Year 6 were below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improvements in teaching are now making up for lost time and pupils' progress is improving quickly. The quality of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics has improved substantially during the current academic year as teachers' expectations rise and developments in teaching take effect. An increasing proportion of pupils currently in the school are working at expected standards in English and mathematics.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not significantly different from the progress made by other pupils in the school. Both groups are not achieving as well as they should. Consequently, differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils nationally have not diminished quickly enough. There is evidence that disadvantaged pupils in the school are making faster progress, although too many are still not working at standards that are typical for their age.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive some effective additional support. The benefits of this are clear to see and, as a result, the progress of these pupils is improving. Nevertheless, procedures for checking the impact of different types of support provided do not ensure that leaders are well informed about what it is working well and what could be improved.
- In recent years, too few of the most able pupils have achieved the higher standards at the end of Year 6. While developments in teaching during this year mean that the most able pupils learn increasingly well, they are not consistently challenged in all classes and their progress remains uneven across the school.
- Pupils' work across other areas of the curriculum provides them with good opportunities to develop their knowledge and use their skills in different subjects.
- Pupils' progress is strengthening across the school. Effective teaching in Year 3 means that pupils quickly settle into school and learn well. Meanwhile, the school's assessment information shows that pupils in Year 6 have made stronger progress since September 2017. As a result, they are in a much better position to achieve well at the end of key stage 2 and are, therefore, increasingly being better prepared for the next stage of their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	109538
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	10046398

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Trinder
Headteacher	Marion Stewart-Smith
Telephone number	01582 725 069
Website	www.farleyjuniorschool.org.uk
Email address	admin@farley.juniorluton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21– 22 May 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the government’s pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in every class. Some of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were examined by inspectors throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the inclusion coordinator, a group of subject leaders, the PE Leader, a newly qualified teacher and the school business manager. The lead inspector also met with several governors, including the chair of the governing body, and the local authority adviser.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class, and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school. They also met with three different groups of pupils more formally to discuss their learning and many aspects of school life. An inspector attended a whole school assembly.
- Members of the inspection team heard some pupils read. Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading habits and looked at their reading records.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; minutes from the governing body meetings; reports produced by the local authority; the school's own evaluation; improvement plans; and records about behaviour, safeguarding children and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, 11 responses to the Ofsted free-text system and an email received from a parent. Inspectors also took account of the school's own survey, which included the views of 69 parents. Inspectors spoke to some parents before school. Additionally, inspectors took account of the 31 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and the 68 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Fiona Webb, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tessa Holledge	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jacqueline Treacy	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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