

Inspection of a good school: Farnborough Road Infant School

Farnborough Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 3DF

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 March 2023

Outcome

Farnborough Road Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. Pupils appreciate leaders' ambition that everyone feels special, has hope and a reason to smile. Pupils feel at ease and enjoy one another's company. They have lots of friends. Pupils often give staff a friendly greeting as they pass them in the corridors.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. This is because leaders have set high expectations for what children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 should learn. Children in the early years, including those in the two-year-old provision, quickly find that learning through stories, rhymes and talk is an important and successful part of their education at Farnborough Infants.

Pupils said that they feel safe at the school. They know that they can tell staff their worries. Leaders act quickly and effectively to resolve any incidents of bullying. Pupils behave themselves very well because leaders set clear expectations for all pupils' conduct.

Pupils gain valuable extra knowledge, and develop their respect for other people, through a range of educational trips. For instance, they spoke maturely of their recent informative visit to a local synagogue.

Pupils are thrilled to be trusted by staff with special helper roles, including on the school council. Many pupils enjoy attending clubs, such as musical theatre, 'little voices', judo and archery.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought carefully about the knowledge, including new words, that pupils should be taught. Leaders have also drawn on their understanding of how pupils learn to create a curriculum that is shaped around pupils' needs. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about the rich heritage and landscape of the Sefton coast, the town of Southport and further afield.

Subject leaders support teachers and teaching assistants adeptly, so that the high-quality curriculum is delivered well. Leaders guide staff on how to strengthen their teaching, making sure that they identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Teachers work together in teams to identify how to deliver leaders' intended curriculum creatively and effectively. For instance, they celebrate red squirrel day when pupils learn about these local animals.

Mostly, staff work skilfully to support and extend the learning of pupils. They gently guide children, including two-year-olds, to be kind and thoughtful towards others. Classrooms are typically full of rich conversation focused on learning, with minimal disruptions to lessons. Nevertheless, on occasions, some staff in the Nursery classes ask children too many questions in quick succession. At these times, staff's conversation with children is stilted and some children learn less well.

Staff help pupils to remember their previous learning, for instance, through recaps of key knowledge at the start of units of work. In different learning activities, teachers deftly check what pupils understand and can do. They spot gaps in pupils' knowledge, then carefully re-explain key information. Pupils build a deep body of knowledge in the different curriculum subjects.

Pupils, including those with SEND, learn well. They develop secure knowledge across the curriculum. Pupils are articulate, able to explain their ideas and increasingly able to justify their understanding and opinions to others. They leave the school well placed to continue their education at junior school.

Leaders have made certain that pupils love reading. Starting in the classroom for two-year-olds, staff read and re-read to children a rich variety of well-chosen stories, books, poems and rhymes. Some pupils spoke imaginatively of the story that their teacher had shared about an old man living in a forest.

Many pupils at the school excel at reading unfamiliar words accurately. However, a few pupils learn to read less well. In part, this is because some staff do not say letter sounds correctly. Also, occasionally, the reading books that staff ask pupils to read are not well matched to pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds. Although staff are supportive when listening to pupils read aloud, from time to time, some staff give pupils too much help. Leaders have already started to strengthen their approach to the teaching of early reading, but it is too soon to judge the impact of their actions. Most pupils learn to read well.

Leaders ensure that pupils' personal development is nurtured carefully. Pupils develop a firm understanding of what they should do to stay healthy. For instance, they told the inspector to eat fruit, exercise and drink sugar-free drinks. All pupils learn to recognise the contributions of women, such as Rosa Parkes, Marie Curie and Queen Victoria, to the advancement of society.

Subject leaders have a clear understanding of how the curriculum in each class is developed and taught. They use this information well to inform senior leaders and

governors about the school's work. This aids governors to challenge and support leaders effectively about the quality of education.

Staff said that Farnborough Infants is a rewarding, joyful place to work. Leaders ensure a reasonable workload for staff, as well as prioritising staff's well-being and promoting the excellent working relationships between staff and leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that adults working at the school understand how to safeguard pupils. For instance, leaders make sure that new teachers are fully introduced to their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders and staff record safeguarding information about pupils thoroughly. This enables leaders to provide clear timelines of events, details of issues that arose and how they have acted to protect pupils. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide pupils and their families with support as required.

Leaders and governors carefully assure themselves that pupils are safe at the school. For example, leaders use audits, including about online safety, to review thoroughly their safeguarding work and pinpoint any aspects for improvement. Leaders and staff teach pupils how to stay safe, including how to use a mobile phone safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff in the early years do not use questions skilfully. These staff do not enable children to take part in back-and-forth conversations. This limits how well some children build their language. Leaders should ensure that all staff understand how to use questions and other teaching strategies to develop rich conversation with children about their learning.
- Some aspects of the early reading curriculum are not delivered consistently well across early years and key stage 1. Sometimes, some staff use impure letter sounds, select reading books not well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge or help pupils too much when they read. These inconsistencies mean that some pupils do not read as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff who teach reading have the expertise that they need and work in the same systematic way, so that pupils become fluent readers.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	104863
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10240148
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Strom
Headteacher	Jennifer Sephton
Website	www.farnboroughroadinfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 May 2017 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school shares a campus with three other providers that are separately registered and inspected by Ofsted: (i) Farnborough Road Junior School (ii) Fun 4 Kidz - Farnborough Road EY265343, which provides a breakfast, after-school and holiday club and (iii) First Steps Family Well-being Centre, which is a registered children's centre. These providers were not part of this inspection.
- First Steps Family Well-being Centre shares an entrance with Farnborough Road Infant School and is managed by the school governing body through an advisory board.
- Leaders provide 16 places for two-year-old children in a dedicated classroom called the caterpillar class. This classroom is located in the First Steps Family Well-being Centre. Children aged three and four years old attend either the butterfly or ladybird Nursery classes in a dedicated separate building at the school.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. He met with leaders to discuss their subject curriculums. He visited lessons with subject leaders and reviewed examples of pupils' work. The inspector spoke with pupils and staff about the curriculum.
- The inspector considered some information about other curriculum subjects, including a sample of documents available on the school's website.
- Accompanied by leaders, the inspector visited the classrooms for two-, three- and four-year-old children to observe learning activities.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to a member of staff.
- To understand life at the school, the inspector met with groups of staff and with pupils. He considered responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's surveys.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke by telephone with an officer of the local authority. He also spoke by telephone with a school improvement partner.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector considered the views of parents, carers and pupils, spoke with leaders and staff and checked a sample of leaders' records and policies.
- The inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair and the vice chair of governors.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023