

Inspection of Farnworth Church of England Controlled Primary School

Pit Lane, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 9HS

Inspection dates: 3 and 4 July 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Farnworth is not just a school. It is a family. Pupils feel that they are well cared for and the relationships between pupils and staff are positive and respectful. This was summed up by some Year 5 pupils who shared with inspectors that they wanted to take their teachers with them to high school.

Pupils said that staff provide timely help if they feel worried or upset. Staff make sure that they address any incidents of unkindness between pupils, including bullying, thoroughly and swiftly. This helps pupils to feel safe. Those pupils who take on leadership roles, such as being a member of the school council, make a valuable contribution to the school community.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should achieve. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Staff expect pupils to be well behaved. Pupils respond positively to these high expectations, and they are attentive in their lessons. Pupils move calmly and sensibly around school and play together well at social times.

Pupils enjoy, and benefit from, the rich curriculum on offer at Farnworth. Pupils were very proud to share examples of their learning and sporting achievements. Pupils are afforded opportunities to learn to play different musical instruments, such as the drums and keyboards. They also enjoy gospel singing.

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

Leaders, governors and staff have a shared ambition that all pupils, including those with SEND, will achieve their very best. Leaders have found the right balance between academic success and developing pupils as well-rounded citizens. Parents and carers expressed overwhelmingly positive views about the school.

Through the school's well-designed curriculum, leaders have ensured that there is a suitably broad range of subjects on offer for pupils from the early years to Year 6. Leaders have identified what pupils need to know. They have broken learning down into small steps that help pupils to successfully build their knowledge over time.

Leaders have ensured that staff teach important subject content in a logical order so that pupils gradually develop a rich body of subject knowledge. Teachers use assessment strategies well to identify what pupils know and what they need to learn next. Staff use assessment information skilfully to help them to meet the needs of children and pupils.

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. They settle into school life well. Children across the early years join in enthusiastically with the wide range of

activities that help them to gain a secure foundation in readiness for their move to Year 1.

Leaders ensure that staff are equipped well to identify the needs of pupils with SEND in a timely manner. Staff adapt their delivery of the curriculum well for this group of pupils. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their classmates and they achieve well.

Almost all pupils become confident and fluent readers by the end of Year 2. Leaders have trained staff so that they are confident to deliver the phonics programme. In the main, staff deliver this programme skilfully. However, some staff are still honing their expertise to deliver aspects of the phonics programme as leaders intend. This means that, from time to time, some staff do not ensure that pupils read books that are matched closely enough to their phonics knowledge.

Staff are quick to identify, and then support, those pupils at risk of not keeping up in reading. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly. A love of reading is evident across the school. Staff inspire pupils to read in creative ways, including through visits from authors and bringing texts to life through drama.

Pupils' wider development is prioritised by staff. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupil groups, such as the school council, the safety team and Year 6 buddies, take their roles and responsibilities seriously. Pupils have opportunities to debate and discuss a range of issues. They also access a wide range of activities, including sport, drama, computer coding, gymnastics, art, dance and times tables clubs. Leaders provide other experiences such as residential visits and school trips. They also invite visitors and specialist teachers to broaden pupils' horizons and enrich the curriculum further.

Pupils, and children in the early years, help to keep the atmosphere during lessons calm and purposeful. Staff use leaders' behaviour system consistently well. This means that pupils know what staff expect of them, and as a result, pupils behave well. Low-level disruption is extremely rare. Pupils attend school regularly.

Governors know the school well. They offer an appropriate balance of support and challenge to leaders, with a particular focus on the quality of education.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' actions to create a positive working environment. There is a strong sense of team spirit. Staff feel well supported by leaders and by their colleagues. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. As a result, staff morale is high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors understand their responsibility to keep pupils safe. Consequently, leaders make sure that all staff are trained well to identify and

address any safeguarding concerns quickly. Staff have a clear and consistent understanding about what to do to report any concerns that they may have about pupils' welfare. Leaders take swift action to support pupils, including working closely with external agencies. They place great importance on open communication with families.

Pupils understand the need to keep themselves safe. They described with ease the many ways that they can do this. For example, pupils know how to stay safe while they are online. They learn who they can trust. Pupils know what action to take if they feel unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff are still honing their expertise to deliver aspects of the phonics programme as leaders intend. This means that, from time to time, some staff do not ensure that pupils read books that are matched closely enough to their phonics knowledge. This hinders a very small number of pupils in becoming fluent and confident readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that staff receive ongoing training and support so that they can deliver the phonics programme consistently well.

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	111394
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10268819
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Murray
Headteacher	Andrew Redman
Website	www.farnworthcofeprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection.
- This is a voluntary-aided Church of England school, and it is part of the Diocese of Liverpool. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2016.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, physical education, art and design and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils read to a

familiar adult. Inspectors also met with leaders to discuss curriculums in other subjects.

- Inspectors spoke with a group of governors and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors were unable to speak with any Year 6 pupils during this inspection owing to a previously arranged visit.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. They also checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Barraclough	His Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Howard	Ofsted Inspector

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