

Inspection of Farnham Common Infant School

Beaconsfield Road, Farnham Common, Slough, Buckinghamshire SL2 3HS

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| Inspection dates: | 21 and 22 January 2025 |
| The quality of education | Requires improvement |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Previous inspection grade | Good |

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They welcome visitors warmly, introduce themselves politely and ask sensible questions. Strong relationships ensure that they feel secure and well cared for. Children in the Nursery class are happy, comfortable and settled. Pupils say that everyone is nice to each other in school. Parents and carers are positive about the school's work, praising the school's caring community atmosphere and recognising improvements in communication since the previous inspection.

The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy participating in the wide range of trips, visits and clubs provided by the school. The school is understandably proud of the successful way its woodland area is used to enrich learning. Pupils understand why good behaviour is important and follow the rules most of the time. The older pupils talk about the school's values of 'respect, resilience, innovation, empathy and integrity'.

The school is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and most pupils do. However, despite this ambition, there are weaknesses in the teaching of reading. This affects pupils' achievement. Until recently, the school has not given enough attention or support to pupils who have fallen behind with their reading.

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

Pupils do not achieve well enough in reading. This is due, in part, to previous inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics which have led to weaknesses in pupils' reading skills. For instance, in the past, reading books were not matched well enough to the sounds pupils were learning. Variations in the delivery of the previous phonics programme led to too few pupils achieving expected levels of reading in the Year 1 phonics check in 2024. Extra support provided for these pupils has not worked well enough. While their reading skills have improved, they are still behind where they should be in their reading and so are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school has taken steps to rectify weaknesses in reading provision. Leaders have worked constructively with specialist reading advisers to identify areas for improvement. The school has invested in a new phonics programme and staff have been trained in its delivery. The school is in the very early stages of implementing the programme. It is currently being introduced to all year groups, including a pre-phonics element in the Nursery class.

The school's work with the local authority in the past year has led to improvements in early years provision. Clear expectations, strong relationships and well-established routines help children to settle into school life well. The early years classrooms provide a welcoming, well-designed and stimulating environment. The school checks children's starting points carefully. The early years curriculum prioritises the development of children's speaking, listening and communication skills appropriately. Children achieve well in the early years.

The school has made improvements to other subjects in the curriculum since the last inspection. Pupils learn carefully sequenced curriculum content in a range of subjects, including mathematics, and achieve well when the curriculum is well sequenced. The school uses a range of checks to accurately gauge pupils' needs and starting points, including for pupils with SEND. However, procedures for monitoring pupils' ongoing learning in phonics are not used rigorously enough to check that all pupils are learning as well as they should or to address under-achievement.

Pupils usually behave well in lessons, during breaktimes and when moving around the school. Staff set clear expectations for behaviour and follow the school's behaviour policy consistently. However, sometimes they lack the knowledge and expertise needed to support effectively the very small number of pupils with significant behavioural needs. The school recognises that more needs to be done to ensure staff are confident about supporting pupils with more complex behavioural needs.

The school prioritises pupils' mental health and well-being. The school works constructively with families and mental health organisations to support pupils who suffer from anxiety. An increased focus on attendance, including a more systematic procedure for monitoring and analysing attendance, has led to improvements. The school continues to work closely with parents and the local authority to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly.

The school has been through a period of change in leadership and staffing. Governance has been through a period of transition since September 2024. Several new governors have been appointed. The governing body represents a valuable range of skills and expertise. Governors are clear about what the school does well and where further improvements are needed. They are alert to workload pressures and regularly seek staff views. Staff say that they enjoy working in the school. They say that leaders are thoughtful and considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's phonics programme is at a very early stage of implementation. Pupils are not making the progress in reading that they should and those who struggle with reading are not catching up quickly enough. The school should make sure that the new phonics programme is fully established and implemented consistently well.

- The school's approach to supporting the very small number of pupils with significant behavioural needs is at an early stage of development. Sometimes, the strategies used to support these pupils are not as effective as they could be. This affects how well these pupils engage with their learning. The school should ensure that consistent and effective strategies are in place to support pupils' behaviour.
- The school's checks on pupils' learning in phonics are not as robust as they need to be. This means that the school is not routinely clear about the impact of its work on pupils' learning. The school should strengthen its approaches to checking how well pupils are learning and its impact on pupils' outcomes.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

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| Unique reference number | 110344 |
| Local authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 10359391 |
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 186 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Caroline Clewley (co-chair) Valerie Harffey (co-chair) |
| Headteacher | David Masters (executive headteacher) |
| Website | www.farnhamcommonvillageschools.co.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 15 and 16 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Farnham Common Village Schools Federation. The headteacher is responsible for both schools in the federation.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2021. The assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2023.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings during this inspection. These included discussions with the executive headteacher, assistant headteacher, and other leaders. They also spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through a range of sources, including discussions and Ofsted’s surveys. Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day. They also met with a group of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and the humanities. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils’ work and talking with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Martin Dyer

Ofsted Inspector

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