



Farcet CofE C Primary

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110811
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278521
Inspection dates 14 December 2005 to 15 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs. Joyce Cox LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Mary's Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		PE7 3AR
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01733 240337
Number on roll	130	Fax number	01733 240337
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Helen Trotman
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Julie Branch

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 14 December 2005 - 15 December 2005	Inspection number 278521
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small Church of England primary school, situated in the village of Farcet, serves the local community and the outlying fen area. The school sits at the heart of the community and has excellent links with the local church and the Salvation Army. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and virtually all the pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is very low. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals although the school feels that more families narrowly miss being eligible. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There has been a considerable turnover of staff recently and both the headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2005. There is high pupil mobility.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Farcet C of E Primary is a good school that provides good value for money. The new headteacher has quickly and successfully developed and improved many aspects of the school's work. By working closely and effectively with the deputy headteacher she has, for example, correctly identified the need to improve the provision in the Foundation Stage. The inspection findings support the school's positive assessment of its overall effectiveness. The school runs smoothly and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Parents are very satisfied with the school. One parent writes: 'the school is very well managed, children are well behaved and they enjoy school.' Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average. All pupils make good progress from when they start school. This is because staff know each pupil really well and good teaching helps all children to achieve. Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a satisfactory start. While the teaching for them is good, their accommodation is quite cramped and there is currently no easy access to the outdoor area. The information and communication technology (ICT) suite has been out of commission since July 2005 as a result of a serious infestation of rats which has seriously affected pupils' access to ICT facilities. Pupils get considerable enjoyment from their learning as they are given practical and interesting things to do. They relate well to adults, enjoy being in a small community and appreciate the help they are given to become effective learners. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are outstanding. The headteacher's good leadership and the support given by a dedicated staff ensure that any child who is not making the expected progress is quickly identified and supported. The school realises that the next step is to simplify the ways in which pupils' progress is measured and recorded. Governors are supportive but many are new to their roles and currently undergoing training to more effectively fulfil their monitoring responsibilities. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection because standards are considerably higher and the quality of teaching has improved. The rising trend in national test results means the school has a good capacity to improve further and to become even more successful in raising pupils' achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to improve the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. - Carry on devising ways to simplify how pupils' progress is assessed and recorded. - Restore the information and communication technology suite so that pupils can once again use ICT in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence reveals that the school is being too modest in evaluating pupils' achievement and standards as satisfactory and that in reality they are good. Children start school with average levels of knowledge and skill, although the personal and social development of some children is below the expected levels on entry. This is

partly because many children have not attended playgroups or nurseries before starting school, Children make at least satisfactory progress in the reception class. Children's achievement is restricted because their classroom is cramped and it is difficult for them to move easily between the outdoor and indoor environment. Pupils' attainment in national tests at Year 2 has fluctuated since the last inspection, but rose considerably in 2005. Pupils' scores were above average in all subjects, indicating particularly good achievement, as a high proportion of pupils had some form of learning difficulty. The high quality teaching currently in the Year 1 and 2 class means that this improvement is likely to continue. By the age of eleven standards are high in English, mathematics and science and assessment data show that pupils have made good and, in the case of many less able pupils, very good progress between Year 3 and Year 6. This impressive achievement is due to the high calibre of the teaching and skilful planning to meet pupils' different needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Inspectors judge that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and better than the school's own evaluation. Behaviour is excellent and pupils have exceedingly positive attitudes towards school. Older pupils, in particular, are extremely mature and sensible and are very good at recognising and celebrating each other's personal and academic strengths. Since the teaching captures pupils' interest so effectively, they love coming to school, want to succeed and take great pride in their work and their school. Learning is fun and interesting; one pupil describes it as 'exciting.' Attendance rates are above the national average. Pupils feel completely safe at school and speak very highly of the care and support they receive from all staff. They have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their work as sports leaders, librarians or house captains. The school takes the views of pupils seriously. Through the school council pupils have made decisions about new playground equipment. Learners make very good progress in acquiring the numeracy and literacy skills that will help in later life. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. Their cultural development is good. The inspirational and uplifting school assemblies and a comprehensive personal, health and social education programme help pupils to understand their feelings, get on well with others and contribute successfully to their school and local communities. As the headteacher tells pupils in their assemblies, 'Like stars we can each shine brightly but together we can DAZZLE.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is one of the key reasons for pupils' achieving so well. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their 'superb' teachers who make learning fun and interesting and 'always help us when we get stuck.' The very good

relationships and very detailed planning, together with the fact that staff know pupils so well all help pupils to succeed. Staff go the extra mile to make pupils' learning interesting and enjoyable. For instance, in a very successful science lesson the teacher immediately captured the full attention of the pupils when she said they were all going to see what happens to a solid when the temperature changes by placing chocolate buttons in their mouths! The pupils were highly motivated and showed that they could use and understand specific scientific vocabulary such as 'particles' and 'solidify.' Teaching assistants are capable, competent and highly valued members of the team. They happily and confidently provide good support in lessons to all pupils and in particular to those with learning difficulties. Effective, but very detailed and hard to follow, procedures are in place for assessing and following pupils' progress. The leadership team are wisely devising ways to 'slim down' the large volume of assessment materials so that it can be used even more effectively by all staff. The school is good at making sure that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve their work so that they are fully involved in their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a lively and interesting curriculum. The school is currently seeking ways to further improve the Foundation Stage curriculum and accommodation. This is necessary to make sure children have an exciting and stimulating learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The school is also keen to get its ICT suite re-established. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported very well by all staff. As a result they can participate in all subjects. Those with physical and co-ordination difficulties enjoy and benefit considerably from an early morning daily sensory integration club run by two of the highly competent teaching assistants. As well a realistic focus on basic skills, French and German are also taught to Year 6 pupils by a teacher from the local secondary school. The school successfully teaches pupils to develop safe and healthy lifestyles. Pupils benefit considerably from regular sports coaching provided by a nearby specialist sports college. There is a wide and very interesting range of school clubs and activities such as singing, recorders, football, magazine club, majorettes, swimming and country dancing, which successfully promote pupils' personal and social skills. Pupils make very good progress in acquiring the numeracy and literacy skills to ensure their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in this happy, friendly school which prides itself on welcoming everyone. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is very good. Support for pupils who need extra time and consideration because of difficult family situations is very good, and the headteacher and staff make sure they get to know families well. Child protection procedures are firmly in place and staff are very vigilant. Pupils have clear literacy and numeracy targets which help them to improve their work and older pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work and attain high levels in

national tests. A good number of parents responded to the questionnaire and their views about the school were extremely positive. They like the new leadership team very much, finding them 'approachable and easy to communicate with.' Parents feel that the ethos in the school is 'very positive.' The level of care and consideration pupils show each other is exceptional. This is evident, for example, in the playground where older pupils play with younger ones who are lonely or when they have 'fallen out' with their friends. Year 6 pupils talk of the 'friendly atmosphere' where everyone is valued and respected.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership and management and has skilfully built on the good systems already in the school to move forward. She has worked very hard since her appointment to improve provision in some significant aspects. For instance her decision to divide the Year 1/2 class for numeracy and literacy lessons is having a considerable impact on raising standards as pupils can be taught in smaller two-year groups. The pupils' and parents' views are extremely positive and all of them think that the school is well led and managed. Year 6 pupils appreciate and enjoy the headteacher's sense of humour and say that she 'has made the school fun.' The leadership team have created an ethos where a comparatively new staff has quickly jelled to support each other and to look critically at all that the school does and find ways to improve. The school improvement planning is correctly focused on addressing weaknesses and maintaining strengths. The subject leaders' roles have been improved and now involve governors and teaching assistants in a drive to make an even more imaginative curriculum. Governors give good support to the school, particularly in terms of keeping a close eye on its spending. Many are new to their roles and recognise that they need additional training to help them to sharpen their checking of school improvement. All pupils are treated equally and those who find learning difficult are supported well and helped to take a full part in school life. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in terms of standards and teaching. The enthusiasm and dedication of the new leadership team and the rising trend in national test results means the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school when I visited. It was a real pleasure to talk to some of you and to watch you working and playing. I thought your Christmas play was brilliant! This letter is to tell you about some of the important things I saw. You are lucky at your school because the headteacher, teachers and all the other adults look after you all so well. They encourage you to be happy at school, to be healthy and to stay safe and they ensure you have good opportunities to learn exciting new things. Many of you told me how much you liked your new headteacher and all the other teachers and how well you thought they helped you to learn. Your behaviour is excellent and this makes it easier for the teachers to teach and for you to learn. You enjoy looking after each other such as when you are sports leaders or school council members. You are also very interested in doing different things and love taking part in clubs, trips, assemblies and other exciting things the school provides for you. Your teachers are keen to make the school even better for you. I think that to do that they need to improve the reception children's indoor and outdoor working space. It will also be good if the headteacher and other staff make the way teachers track your progress easier to follow. Finally, I know many of you would like to be able to work in the computer suite again so that you can practice your ICT skills. It was so good to find out that all of you are happy and doing so well at school and that your parents are happy too. Keep working hard and enjoying life at Farcet.