



Farnworth Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111394
LEA Halton
Inspection number 278678
Inspection dates 6 March 2006 to 7 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Delia Hiscock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Pit Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Widnes
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire WA8 9HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 4243042
Number on roll	386	Fax number	0151 4247296
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Smither
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr A Stephenson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Farnworth Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) is a larger than average sized primary school in Widnes. It provides full-time education for 386 pupils between the ages of four and eleven, serving families from a range of backgrounds. A tiny proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's view that this is a good school that provides good value for money. The headteacher, leadership team and governors, have improved provision and generally sustained the good standards of education seen at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides a good quality of care. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average and given the average level of skills with which most pupils enter the school, this represents good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the school provides a good curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive good quality support. Effective measures have been taken to improve reading and writing, the progress of lower attaining pupils in mathematics, and provision for information and communication technology (ICT). Most pupils are happy coming to school. They behave well, are polite, courteous and generally kind towards each other. They are very aware of their own, and others' health and safety.

The quality and standards offered in the Foundation Stage are good. Children achieve well because they have a good start to their education. Overall, the school knows itself well. Leadership is rightly focused on developing the effectiveness of middle managers, and on disseminating the school's best examples of assessment and marking, in order to improve standards even further. The good track record in making improvements demonstrates that the school is well placed to bring about further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that assessment data is used as rigorously as the best in the school to set challenging work for all pupils.
- Ensure that marking explains to pupils what they need to learn next and how they can improve their work.
- Develop further the role of subject leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The majority of children enter school with skills which are similar to those expected nationally. They make good progress overall particularly in their social and personal development, so that standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with those found nationally. Standards pupils attain by the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in reading and in mathematics, but closer to the average in writing. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are very high. In reading and mathematics, standards are above average and in writing just above average. The school has made good headway in addressing pupils' progress in writing by providing extended opportunities for pupils to write at length. Most pupils meet the targets set for them, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The progress of pupils is good but not evenly so across year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most have positive attitudes towards learning. Attendance is above average, but the school is not complacent and is now rightly addressing the number of holidays taken during term time. Pupils behave well around school and in lessons. Most are courteous and friendly towards visitors. School rules are very clear and the system of rewards motivates pupils well. Pupils respect their teachers. They know that they are at school to learn. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet. They like the opportunities they have to exercise, for instance, to improve their swimming skills. Older pupils are well prepared for the choices they may face in life, including those surrounding the misuse of drugs and alcohol and the need to develop positive relationships. They are well prepared for the choices they might face in the future. Pupils have good opportunities to work in teams and to use the skills they have acquired. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The School Council is beginning to play an important role. Pupils confidently voice their ideas on how to make school a better place and they feel they have lots to offer. Well trained 'Play Leaders' provide good opportunities for older children to support others and to take responsibility.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The strengths in teaching, and pupils' good behaviour and concentration combine to make learning good overall. In the best lessons, pupils of all abilities are set challenging work, the pace of learning is effective and pupils enjoy the stimulating work. In the vast majority of lessons pupils make good progress. In all lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to answer questions. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, advice and support is sensitive and helpful. The school's system of grouping pupils of similar ability for English and mathematics is successful. However, where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teachers do not make best use of assessment information to set work to match different abilities. Also, at times, teachers talk too much, or resources are not prepared sufficiently well. Pupils say they find such lessons less interesting. Where best, the quality of marking is outstanding, providing pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work and what they need to learn next. It is here that pupils benefit most. However, these strengths are not consistent and at times, marking is too ordinary to be of much help to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Statutory requirements are met. High standards and the needs of learners of all abilities are promoted. The curriculum provides good opportunities for all the pupils to acquire basic skills for life and an awareness of how to keep healthy and safe. It is enhanced by strengths in science, art and swimming. Work is attractively displayed around the school, and reflects the good range of activities covered.

There are plenty of activities for pupils to work in teams and to develop their skills needed for the future. Clubs and activities cater for a variety of interests. Pupils say they enjoy taking part. Good use is made of both visits in the locality and of visitors who come in to school. A series of Indian dance classes is helping to give pupils an understanding of a culture other than their own. Year 5 pupils wrote enthusiastically about their invitation to sing in Liverpool Cathedral.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The level of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. Teachers, support staff and support agencies work together well to ensure pupils' well-being. This is reflected in pupils' good achievement and personal development overall and in the way that they care about others. Pupils' safety in school is important and pupils are effectively supported. Child protection procedures are in place and well understood by staff. The school takes good account of the risk assessments it undertakes. The systematic checks on pupils' academic progress provide good information from which targets are set for each class to attain. However, the information is not used as thoroughly to set a consistently good level of challenge for pupils' work, and not all pupils understand how they might improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This confirms the view of the school. The headteacher is dedicated in his leadership. With the support of the leadership team, he has made good improvements to the accommodation, provision for ICT, the Foundation Stage, and standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The very high standards in science have been sustained since the previous inspection. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. Pivotal changes in the leadership structure have brought effective plans into being to involve the subject leaders in developing teaching and learning further to build on the successes achieved. The school takes account of the views of parents and those close to its work. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. A high priority is given to pupils' well-being and to including pupils, whatever their ability or background. There are good links with external agencies and other schools that support pupils where needed and extend the expertise the school can use. The school's performance is monitored effectively and evaluations are generally

accurate. However, the challenging goals pupils are expected to attain are not always shared with them and marking does not always help them to improve their work.

Governors have a good awareness of the strengths and needs of the school. They carry out their responsibilities comprehensively and work closely with staff to carry out improvements. As a result, plans are in place to develop further the role of subject leaders. Given the comparatively low level of funding, the effective use of building grants and the standards attained, the school gives good value for money. The school is well placed make further improvements.

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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	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	2	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?	3	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	2	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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when you were talking to us about all you do in school. We would like to tell you what we thought about your school. You said that you like the clubs and that 'the teachers help you to sort any problems out.' We agree. The grown-ups in the school care a lot for you and try to make sure you get lots of help in your lessons.

The teachers and helpers provide lots of interesting things for you to learn and help you to know how to be safe and healthy. You behave well in lessons and around the school and you are helpful to visitors like us. We can see that you enjoy school. There are plenty of good things about your school. We especially like the way that you listen so well in lessons.

To help make sure that everyone can do their best we have asked some of your teachers to:

- explain what you need to do to improve your work
- set more work for you that makes you think a lot and is really enjoyable.

You can help too by trying hard to improve your work when teachers mark it so that you can learn quickly. Good luck for the future.