



Farnham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115189
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279536
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. John Godwood AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Farnham
School category	Voluntary aided		CM23 1HR
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01279771339
Number on roll	34	Fax number	01279771339
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Lynda Maple
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr. Charles Hardingham

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school. There are two mixed-age classes that are reorganised into three classes on Monday to Thursday mornings. Pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. All pupils are from a White British heritage. The proportion who have learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The headteacher left in December 2005 and since then the school has had two acting headteachers. The current acting headteacher will continue in the autumn term 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory with good features. This matches its own evaluation. Its small size brings both benefits and challenges. It is a happy school with a family atmosphere. Staff know the children well and work hard to meet their needs. Planning for the wide age range in each class, however, is a considerable challenge. The lack of a permanent headteacher for the past two terms has slowed the school's development. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Foundation Stage pupils settle well and make good progress as a result of good provision. Through the rest of the school, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average, although they vary considerably as there are so few children. Standards are currently higher in mathematics than English. Writing standards in Year 2, which were improving through a focus on independent writing and careful assessment, have dropped again this year and are not as high as they should be. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and feel safe. Older and younger children mix well. Attendance and behaviour are good. Many parents are pleased by their children's enthusiasm and confidence. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of up to four year groups in one class. Pupils respond well. The use of assessment to support learning has been developed considerably this year, but there remains more to be done. In particular, the links between progress tracking, target setting and planning individual programmes are not strong enough to ensure that all pupils make as much progress as they can. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by French and specialist teaching of sport and music, but the range of clubs is limited due to the small numbers of staff and pupils. Care, guidance and support are good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors have guided the school well through an uncertain time. The acting headteacher and staff work well together to maintain the ethos and keep up developments. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but not fully rigorous. Finances are used well to maintain staffing and ensure that the school is well equipped and well maintained. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school has the capacity to improve, although this is in part dependent on making suitable arrangements for permanent leadership.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the focus on writing in Years 1 and 2 to ensure previous improvements are maintained. - Ensure that pupils' progress is tracked carefully in relation to challenging targets and they are provided with suitable individual programmes. - Establish long-term leadership arrangements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although standards vary somewhat each year because there are so few children. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils

in the Foundation Stage make good progress and are working securely within the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been above average in some recent years, but are currently average. They are higher in mathematics than English, and weaker in writing than reading. The standard of writing was an issue in the last inspection. It has since improved, but slipped again this year in relation to the past two years. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also broadly average. In mathematics, they have improved this year and are above average. In English and science, they are average. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and make satisfactory progress. The school sets reasonably challenging targets. These have mostly been met, except for the most recent target for writing at the end of Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. The school has a strong family atmosphere, in which older and younger children get on well and support each other. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The acting headteacher has strengthened the opportunities for spiritual reflection in keeping with the school's Christian ethos. He is rightly planning to increase pupils' knowledge of other cultures. Most pupils behave very well, although they are annoyed by a small number who have difficulty controlling their behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school and are taught effectively how to stay safe and to keep healthy through healthy eating and good sporting activities. The very good playground equipment encourages activity. They have good opportunities to make a positive contribution to the community. The school council is well respected and represents pupils' views effectively. Many pupils take on small responsibilities and enthusiastically raise money for charity and school facilities. Pupils have a sound preparation for the economic skills they will need.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, and often good. As there are only three classes, each class contains pupils from between two to four year groups and of widely varying ability. Classes are small and teachers know the pupils very well. They plan carefully to meet all pupils' needs, although this is a considerable challenge. Lessons are generally well structured and have a clear purpose that pupils understand. At times, the sheer complexity of planning results in some time being lost for a minority. Pupils enjoy lessons because the activities are often interesting. They behave well and usually pay good attention. Pupils with learning difficulties are generally well supported by the teaching assistants. The school has made considerable progress in using assessment to support learning. Assessments are regular and the results used in planning lessons. Pupils' learning is focused through broad targets for each subject and through assessing

their own and others' work. However, the links between target setting, progress tracking and planning for individual pupils are not strong enough to ensure that all pupils are given the support they need to make maximum progress. Marking is satisfactory but does not consistently provide enough guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched by swimming lessons and a weekly activities afternoon that pupils enjoy. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in music and sports. They learn French in Key Stage 2. The curriculum is currently being developed to strengthen the links between subjects and develop basic skills through topic work. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving pupils' knowledge of information and communication technology, which is now satisfactory. The school makes some use of its links with other schools to broaden the curriculum, although these opportunities are not regular. There is a limited range of extra-curricular clubs, some of which are offered by parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. There are good arrangements for child protection and ensuring safety in school. Staff know the pupils very well and provide a good level of individual care, although some pupils feel that their concerns are not always taken seriously enough. There are good links with external agencies to provide additional support for pupils who need it. Pupils receive sound academic guidance. They know their targets and are generally informed on how well they are doing in relation to them. There are good arrangements for settling new pupils into the Reception class and preparing pupils for the transition to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The lack of a permanent headteacher and changes of acting headteacher have slowed the development of the school, although the governors and staff have been effective in maintaining quality and parents' confidence. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of what it offers. Several expressed sentiments such as 'Farnham School is a wonderful little school'. The governors have guided the school well through a difficult period. They are well informed and take a strategic view. They monitor the school's quality and provide good support in managing finances and improving the facilities. The acting headteacher provides good leadership. He has maintained the school's ethos and gained the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. He has sound plans to continue improvements to teaching and the curriculum. The subject coordinators work well as a team and have worked hard to keep up developments in a period of uncertainty.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher and coordinators monitor some lessons and pupils' work, but this is not done as systematically as it should be. The school has a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and makes good use of parents' and pupils' views when planning improvements. However, pupils' attainment and progress over time are not analysed in sufficient depth to provide a reliable picture of school performance. The work of the governors, headteacher and coordinators show there is the capacity to improve, although this is to some extent dependent on establishing long-term leadership arrangements.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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

I very much enjoyed visiting your school and would like to thank you for your friendly welcome and for sharing your thoughts with me. Your school is a happy school. Some of you told me that you like going to a small school. It was nice to see how older and younger children get on so well together. Most of you behave very well. I was pleased to see that you help each other and contribute to running the school. The school council does a good job in putting your views forward. Your teachers take good care of you and work very hard to plan lessons that suit pupils of different ages. You told me that many of your lessons are fun. I saw some good lessons during my visit where you worked hard and made good progress. The youngest children make a good start in Class 1. You continue to make progress through the school and many of you do well in tests. You do well in maths, but some children do not do so well in their writing. I have asked the school to keep working to improve writing. Teachers check how well you are doing and set you targets. I have asked the school to use the results even more to plan work that will make sure that all children make as much progress as they can. As you know, the school does not have a permanent headteacher. Mr Hardingham and the teachers are making sure that the school remains a happy place and are making improvements, such as the outdoor classroom. However, the school does need a permanent headteacher and the governors are working hard on this. I think that the school will continue to improve. You can help by working hard to meet your targets, particularly in your writing. I wish you well with that.