



Fawbert and Barnard Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117149
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279996
Inspection dates 10 May 2006 to 11 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Alison Pangbourne LI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Knight Street
School category	Community		CM21 9AX
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01279 722357
Number on roll	223	Fax number	01279 306498
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Hazel Gostling
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Sylvia Wilson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized infant school. Most pupils come from White British families with a few from minority ethnic heritages. Very few are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils taking a free school meal is well below average. When children start school, standards for most are typical for 3 year olds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fawbert and Barnard Infants' school rightly thinks of itself as a good school. Parents and pupils agree and are extremely positive about all it offers. Inspectors also agree that it is a good school with some outstanding features. When children start Nursery, standards are broadly typical for 3 year olds. They get off to a flying start and make good progress through Nursery and the Reception classes. In recent years, standards for 7 year olds have generally been well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This year there is an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in Year 2 and standards are expected to be not quite as high, but still above average. All pupils make good progress because the quality of teaching is effective and the exciting curriculum gives them many opportunities to find things out for themselves. Fewer pupils exceed the expected level in writing than in reading but the school has made a good start in narrowing this gap. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are excellent. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are extremely well cared for. There is a small amount of absence due to families taking holidays during term time. Every effort is made by the school to reduce this. The headteacher provides excellent and clear-sighted leadership, well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff. Together with the governors, they continually strive to find ways to help the pupils do even better. The areas that have significantly improved since the previous inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further raise standards for 7 year olds in writing, by continuing to improve the proportion who exceed the level expected for their age. - Continue to work with parents to improve attendance by discouraging them from taking children on holiday in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children in the Nursery and Reception class make good progress because of the good teaching and the interesting things to do. By the beginning of Year 1, most children have exceeded the level expected for their age. Standards recently have been generally well above average for 7 year olds, with the exception of 2004 when there was an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the year group. This is the case again this year but, even so, pupils are on track to reach levels which are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are making good progress. Standards in writing, whilst being above average, have lagged behind those in reading because a smaller proportion exceeds the level expected for their age. The school has been working hard to narrow the gap by, for example, closely monitoring progress and ensuring that the very youngest children have plenty of opportunities to develop their writing skills. Pupils

are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is because they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, many of them reach the expected level for their age.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Excellent behaviour and a real enthusiasm for learning help them to enjoy school immensely. Attendance is just below average despite the school's best efforts to improve it. This is mainly due to some families taking holidays abroad in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and creates a friendly atmosphere in the school. They are well informed about the diversity of cultures both in school and elsewhere. The pupils are mature, confident and sensible in their actions, showing a clear understanding of right and wrong. They contribute effectively to the wider community through charity events that further their personal qualities and knowledge about the world of work. They understand how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, choosing healthy meals at lunchtime. Regular opportunities for exercises in lessons and for sipping water aid their concentration. There are good opportunities for sport and exercise. The exciting activities available at lunchtime contribute positively to pupils' physical and personal development. Pupils know their views are taken seriously. They are regularly asked for their opinions about many aspects of school life. They have a good grounding for the next stage of their education through the very strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy and computer skills and opportunities to work in pairs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching is good overall in the Nursery and Reception classes, where children have a wide range of fascinating and exciting activities and their skills are developed well. Some excellent lessons were seen during the inspection. Here, teachers used every moment to extend learning and engaged stimulating methods to enthuse the pupils. All staff have high expectations. Good quality assessment, lesson planning and tracking of pupils' progress result in interesting lessons that are well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers share their expectations with the pupils with the result that they have a good understanding of their own learning. Teachers use interesting strategies to extend learning. For example, the names of the groups in one class were carefully chosen so that pupils would learn a range of adjectives with similar meanings. Teachers make skilled use of questioning and discussion to widen pupils' understanding and develop their self-confidence. One of the key features which help pupils to learn is the practical nature of many lessons, where they are encouraged to share their ideas with a partner.

The school has developed good systems for tracking pupils' achievements in English and mathematics and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Work is now underway to produce an effective and manageable system for science, particularly in the investigative aspect of the subject.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. It is enriched by a good range of well-attended lunchtime clubs, for example, Ocarina, Book Club, French and Italian. Other activities with a specific subject focus, such as an art day, book day or multicultural day, further broaden pupils' experiences. A good range of visits and visitors also enrich the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on providing a well-rounded, practical education and there is a strong focus on music. Good attention is paid to developing basic skills and making links between subjects to make schooling more creative and innovative, such as, developing extended writing across the curriculum. There is a good personal, social and health education programme and good hygiene practices are well promoted through the curriculum. For example, in a singing assembly, pupils sang enthusiastically about cleaning teeth and drinking water before going to bed.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' care, guidance and support are outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very robust and regularly reviewed. The school takes very good care of all its pupils through very clear health, safety and welfare procedures. Child protection arrangements are in place and widely understood. All staff have been trained recently. Risk assessments are effective and conscientiously observed. Good support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and for the few learning English as an additional language effectively help them to do as well as they can. Staff know their pupils very well. The school works closely with social care and health agencies to monitor pupils' health and emotional well-being. Pupils feel secure and free from any form of racism or bullying. There is a clear culture of mutual respect and pupils receive very good personal support and guidance. They express confidence in their teachers and teaching assistants, knowing that any problem will be dealt with fairly. Pupils have targets to work towards to help them improve. They talk confidently about what they have to do and this contributes positively to standards and achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and leads the school with a clear and purposeful vision that is highly focused on continual improvement. She knows what needs to be done to improve further and sets about this with dedication, well supported by the deputy and staff. Subject leaders

have a good understanding of areas for development in their subjects through their thorough monitoring. The school has identified the right areas for improvement in the good school development plan. This shows that its self-evaluation is effective. It has identified that more pupils could reach the higher level in writing and is working towards this. The way that the school works to include pupils from all backgrounds is excellent and contributes to the warm, family ethos. The views of all members of the community and especially parents are welcomed and are taken into account when planning for the school's future development. The governors watch over the school very well and their team spirit is helping to drive the school forward. They are fully involved in the work of the school and show commitment. The constant desire to do even better, and the improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection, show that 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	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	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?	1	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	1	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

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for helping us. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we liked best. We agree with you that learning is great fun at your school and you have lots of really interesting things to do both in lessons and at lunchtime. We thought you behaved excellently and that you all played very nicely with your friends. We noticed that you are very sensible and like to help your teachers. All the grown-ups look after you extremely well and help you learn. If you find something hard to do there are lots of people to help you. Mrs Wilson and your teachers make sure that your school is a lovely place to be. Your families know that you go to a good school. We have asked Mrs Wilson to help some of you to do as well in writing as you do in reading, and you can help by continuing to try hard with your story writing. We have also asked her to ask your parents to make sure that you all come to school every day unless you are ill. We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Fawbert and Barnard school and do well in your next school.