



Furneux Pelham Church of England School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 117394
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280065
Inspection dates 28 March 2006 to 29 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Helen Ranger LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Furneux Pelham
School category	Voluntary controlled		SG9 0LH
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01279 777344
Number on roll	141	Fax number	01279 777927
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Linda Bratt
Date of previous inspection	25 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sue Skelton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. It mainly serves Furneux Pelham and the other nearby 'Pelham villages', although pupils also come from a wider area through parental choice. The roll is rising. Almost all pupils come from White British families and the remainder are bilingual speakers from other European backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties or disabilities is low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection endorses the school's view that its overall effectiveness is good. It also has some outstanding features. The views of parents and pupils are typified by the parent who commented, 'My children love their school, feel very secure and enjoy the high standard of teaching'. The youngest children are given a flying start in Reception and, from an average starting point, they reach standards above those expected for their age by the end of their first year. Pupils in the rest of the school achieve well and the oldest reach high academic standards. Pupils' personal development is extremely good. Teaching is good overall, although it has been affected by staff changes in Years 1 and 2 over the past two years that have led to some ups and downs in pupils' learning. This situation is improving again and there are good plans to increase the proportion of pupils who reach above average levels in the Year 2 assessments, especially in writing. Teachers have embarked on a consistent approach to assessment and target-setting that is improving the ways pupils know what they need to learn next. This initiative has been planned well and will need to be evaluated in future to check its impact. The impact of the school's leadership and management is good overall and the school gives good value for money. The headteacher sets an excellent lead and has managed the staff changes of recent years well. The new deputy head and subject leaders are effectively contributing to the school's development. Governors give valuable support, especially in ensuring improvements to the premises. The school has maintained high standards in many areas since its previous inspection and remedied the areas of weakness. With the current team of staff and governors, it shows a good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades in writing, especially in Year 2. - Carry out the planned arrangements for target-setting with pupils and monitor these to ensure that they have a positive effect on the standards achieved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From an average starting point, pupils make good progress, including those with learning difficulties. By Year 2 in recent years, standards have often been well above average. They were not quite as strong in 2005, partly because of the effects of several staff changes in Years 1 and 2. For example, while high standards were maintained in reading, fewer pupils achieved the higher levels in writing and to a lesser extent in mathematics. Evidence from the current Year 2 indicates that pupils' progress is improving again and has been good this term. However, relative to their capabilities, not enough pupils are likely to reach higher than average grades this year in writing. Standards in the national tests at Year 6 have been mostly high in recent years and were exceptionally high in 2005 in English and mathematics. The proportion who reached Level 5 was much higher than the national average. Challenging performance

targets are set by the school which were exceeded last year. The current Year 6 group is on track to do well again. An issue for improvement in the last inspection was to raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT). This has been done well and standards now exceed those expected nationally. The inspection did not examine all subjects but high standards in art and singing were seen.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance rates are very high. In Reception, the youngest pupils thoroughly enjoy school, get on very well with others and behave extremely well. These good qualities are equally evident throughout the school. Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning. By Year 6, they are mature and confident young people who are a credit to the school and to their families. Pupils say unacceptable behaviour is very rare and are confident staff will deal with it swiftly if it occurs. Pupils take advantage of the regular encouragements to lead a healthy lifestyle, such as when they bring fruit for breaktime snacks or take part in regular exercise. They are clear about how to keep themselves safe, for example, on the roads or when using the internet. They very enthusiastically respond to opportunities to contribute to the school community via the School Council and their duties as monitors. They are very aware of their responsibilities in the wider community and this was demonstrated in the activities they organised and ran for Charity Week. The high standards achieved by the oldest pupils in literacy, numeracy and ICT, combined with their extremely good social skills and attitudes to learning mean that they are in an excellent position to take advantage of the next stage of their education and have a strong basis for the future world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. All the lessons seen during the inspection were at least good and there were examples of outstanding practice. Pupils say, 'Teachers make lessons interesting and fun'. There has been good progress in stabilising the teaching of the younger pupils following the staff changes. Good provision in the Foundation Stage skilfully combines activities led by adults with those the children choose for themselves. Behaviour is managed very well in all classes. Expectations of pupils' performance are mostly high although, occasionally, the more capable pupils are capable of rising to even greater challenges than they are offered. Very effective use is made of support staff, and pupils benefit from high levels of individual attention as a result. The teaching assistant in charge of ICT is very skilled and contributes well to the rising standards. The school employs experienced teachers to cover the times that class teachers are released for preparation and to provide activities such as drama and 'booster' classes. This ensures that pupils are consistently taught by good

practitioners and make effective progress. The arrangements to assess work and track progress are good. They have recently benefited from the introduction of more consistent and systematic target-setting with pupils. Pupils are also being encouraged to evaluate their own achievements. These initiatives have been planned well but are yet to have a full impact on pupils' longer-term achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It covers all the required subjects and areas of learning. There is efficient planning for the needs of the mixed age groups in each class, for pupils with learning difficulties and for those with particular gifts or talents. Since the last inspection, provision in ICT has improved greatly and is very well resourced. The school is establishing relevant links between subjects that are making activities more interesting. There are very effective programmes of personal, social and health education and citizenship. The school's efforts in recent years have been recognised by its Healthy School award and the Naacemak for ICT. The statutory curriculum is enhanced well by extra activities, especially for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The range of after-school clubs includes good opportunities in sport, drama and modern foreign languages. Pupils benefit from visits and residential trips and particularly enjoy the themed weeks such as Feeling Good Week and Maths Week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is good provision for pupils' care. Day-to-day pastoral care is extremely good and greatly appreciated by an overwhelming majority of the parents who expressed a view. Pupils say they are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem. There are efficient systems to ensure pupils' safety and security, including attention to child protection arrangements and the vetting of adults who work in school. Staff give pupils sound guidance on their academic development and this is improving further with the new target-setting arrangements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. A strong ethos is maintained based on good relationships at all levels and, as a Church of England school, on Christian values. Equal opportunities for pupils are generally promoted well, although the most capable pupils in Key Stage 1 could do even better and the school is working hard to achieve this. The headteacher has maintained high academic standards, developed the premises well and ensured the school's popularity with parents and pupils. Self-evaluation systems are thorough and accurate. Governors work closely and effectively with the staff. All interested parties are consulted well on the school's continuing development. The school is coping well with the challenges of the recent staff turnover. It benefits from the wider experience gained by the headteacher in her consultancy role with

other local schools. The high priority given to staff training has ensured that new staff, including the deputy head, settle quickly and take on responsibilities efficiently. The teams of subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility well and are increasingly using assessment information to inform their planning for further development. The governors bring a valued range of skills to the school and support it effectively. Improvements to their monitoring roles since the last inspection mean they have a clear view of the school and contribute well to its continuing success. They act well as 'critical friends' and are particularly instrumental in leading the further development of the premises as the school continues to grow. The partnership with parents has improved well since the last inspection and their views are now very positive. The school is well placed to continue to provide an effective education for the families it serves.

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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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	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	1	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

Firstly a big thank you to all of you for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. You helped me enormously in finding out about it. You acted as great ambassadors for the school and I was very impressed with your friendliness and behaviour. It was good to hear that you enjoy school very much, like your teachers and that children are kind to each other. I discovered many good things about Furneux Pelham School. Learning is fun and you do well in your work. By the time you get to Year 6, you are very well placed to take good advantage of the opportunities offered by your next school. As well as good literacy and numeracy work, I saw some exciting activities in the ICT room and some excellent art work on display. I enjoyed hearing you sing in assembly. The school works closely with your parents to teach you about the importance of keeping healthy and safe. Mrs Skelton knows you all well and works with your teachers and the governors to make sure your school runs smoothly and keeps improving. You use your School Council well to share your views and to help to make things even better. You were in the middle of your annual Charity Week when I visited. You organised those events very well and everyone had lots of fun in the process. I have talked to Mrs Skelton about some ways to make your school even better. Your teachers agree with me that the younger children in your school could be even better at writing. I hope you will work hard to achieve this if you are in Year 1 or Year 2. I like the way your teachers are setting targets with you all so that you know how to improve your work. I would like them to keep doing this and to check that it is helping you to do even better. It was a pleasure and a privilege to meet you.