



Farnham Royal Church of England Combined School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 110435
Local Authority Buckinghamshire
Inspection number 288673
Inspection date 18 January 2007
Reporting inspector George Rayner

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Farnham Royal
Age range of pupils	4-11		Slough SL2 3AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 644471
Number on roll (school)	325	Fax number	01753 644518
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Mary Harrison
		Headteacher	Mrs Dorothy Harmer
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. The socio-economic circumstances of most pupils are disadvantaged. Standards on entry to the Foundation Stage are below expectations for most pupils. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Almost half of the pupils come from minority cultures, mainly with Pakistani, Indian or Afro-Caribbean heritage. The proportion at an early stage of speaking English is above average. The school has close links with the local parish church. It has Basic Skills, Investors in People and Active Mark status and has also received a county award for inclusion.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents agree and say that their children are happy here and make good progress. The school values highly its Christian ethos. This underpins its quality as a community in which all adults and pupils care for each other, so that pupils feel very secure and happy and in which their personal development and well-being are outstanding. This positive ethos is equally valued by the families of the many non-Christian pupils and their presence contributes strongly to pupils' excellent cultural development. The strong links with the local parish church provide regular opportunities for pupils to be involved in local events and celebrations and they respond enthusiastically to these. The great majority of pupils behave in an exemplary manner. They say emphatically that they enjoy school very much. They show this by their good attendance and their high willingness to work hard. They are so eager to join in with all that the school has to offer that several clubs are oversubscribed.

A good curriculum, good teaching and learning and pupils' very positive response, result in them achieving well and reaching average standards by Year 6. Improvements to teaching have made it more effective in helping pupils to write confidently in a range of styles, use what they learn in mathematics to solve problems and carry out scientific investigations. This is resulting in rising standards in all three subjects. The most able pupils achieve well because they are capable and well motivated enough to make good use of their learning opportunities. However, while most teachers plan good challenges for them, this is not consistent in all lessons, so that their achievement could be even higher than it is.

Quality and standards are good in the Foundation Stage, because staff help children to develop good attitudes to learning and to make swift progress towards expected standards in all their areas of learning. Since the last inspection, the school has transformed the accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage, to make it a bright, stimulating place for children to learn in. However, the outdoor area offers very limited scope for children to develop their independence and learn by playing and exploring.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher provides a very clear direction to colleagues. She is well supported by a capable, united, senior team and staff. Leadership and management have secured good improvement since the last inspection. The school's track record and its effective focus on raising standards show that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help the most able pupils make the best possible progress in all lessons, by ensuring that teachers always provide good challenges for them.
- Improve the outside areas to give children in the Foundation Stage better opportunities to become independent and to learn by playing and exploring.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach average standards by the time they move on to secondary school. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most are working securely in all of their areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. Their strongest area is in counting and using numbers and children also learn particularly well how to develop good attitudes to learning and to think creatively. Progress remains good in the following years. Most pupils reach expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and then maintain the improvement. Most Year 6 pupils are able to speak confidently, express their ideas clearly in writing and use their skills to solve mathematical problems. Pupils' achievement is consistently good. It is similar in English, mathematics and science and no groups achieve significantly less well than others. For example, the needs of those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at an early stage of speaking English are carefully identified and they are supported effectively, so that they achieve as well as their classmates. The most able pupils achieve well because, although some lessons do not challenge them to the fullest possible extent, they work hard and are intelligent enough to take good advantage of their learning opportunities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The great majority of pupils behave exceptionally well. They state their views confidently and listen courteously to those of others. Pupils confidently explain why it is important to eat and drink sensibly. They know why rules are important for safety and to provide the order necessary for good learning. Most pursue active lives and enjoy the very good opportunities that they have to take part in sports and games. While pupils' views about the school are very positive, they are very willing to suggest ways in which it could be even better and say that their ideas are valued. For example, good ideas from the school council have resulted in the introduction of recycling boxes and better soap dispensers in the toilets. Pupils enjoy regular activities in the local church and contribute willingly to charity appeals. Good progress in their main subjects and the sense of responsibility and commitment that most develop, prepare pupils very well for the next stage in their learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils say that the mix of different cultures provides considerable benefits to their learning. They enjoy learning about each others' religions and customs. One said, 'This is important for us to be able to understand each other and get on well together'. Non-Christian pupils say they like coming to a Christian church school, because the things that are important, such as caring for each other, are the same as for their own religion.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons well to provide a variety of interesting activities which motivate pupils to work hard. Pupils say that they know that teachers work hard to make lessons fun. Teachers are learning well how to use interactive whiteboard to involve pupils, who say that they often have opportunities to use them and enjoy this very much. Teachers use group work well to help pupils to learn to work together. They manage classrooms well, with clear procedures to ensure that pupils know when, for example, they should be listening to the teacher, so that little time is wasted. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well as a team to lead the work of groups or give extra help to individual pupils who need this. Teachers use marking well as an opportunity to encourage pupils and guide them on how to improve. Some teachers plan well to provide good challenge for all pupils. This is not consistent in all lessons, however. In some, teachers give too little attention to planning the expectation and challenge for the highest attainers, so that they do not always have the opportunity to achieve to the very best extent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Effective transition from the Foundation Stage helps Year 1 pupils to quickly cope with the developing expectations and ways of working. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers to develop their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and enhance their work in other subjects. Year 3 pupils learn French and plans are in hand to further improve this by extending the subject to other years. Good links with a local grammar school, specialist sports college and professional football club enhance the science and physical education programmes by providing well qualified teaching to pupils and guidance to school staff. The school is developing a cross-curricular approach to let pupils bring together different parts of their learning and make their work more meaningful by using their skills in real situations in different subjects. The development is not complete yet, but already it is succeeding well in its aims. A good range of well-attended clubs provide a variety of sporting, cultural and creative activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The extremely good pastoral care is valued by parents and carers, one of whom said, 'There is a superb family atmosphere that boosts the security and confidence of pupils'. All staff are trained in child protection and all procedures are diligently carried out. The school liaises well with outside agencies to ensure effective additional support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils' starting points and their progress are systematically tracked to ensure that all receive the support that

they need to achieve well. To improve this further, teachers are building up their ability to use records to set realistic, but challenging, targets and to involve pupils in this. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The school has improved this very well, so that it is now good. Teachers work closely with the specialist staff to ensure that pupils' individual learning plans are linked well to their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Systematic self-evaluation has given the school an accurate view of its quality and performance. Focus on raising standards has been clear and effective, while at the same time ensuring that the school is a happy and secure one for pupils. Some subject leaders who have been recently appointed are still developing skills for leading and monitoring their areas, but are being well supported in this by the school and are becoming increasingly effective. The well-organised and knowledgeable governors support the school well and are willing to challenge it when necessary. The leadership has succeeded in securing good improvement since the last inspection. Year 6 standards are higher in mathematics and science and remain strong in English, provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, which was unsatisfactory is now good and Foundation Stage provision has improved significantly.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I enjoyed meeting you and am grateful for the help you gave by talking to me and letting me look at your work. I was able to see that yours is a good school and some things about it are very good indeed. You succeed well in your work. You achieve equally well in all of your main subjects and it was good to see that almost all of you succeed as well as each other.

It is clear that you enjoy school a lot. Some of you told me that you know the teachers work very hard to make lessons interesting. A group of you said that one of the best things about your school is the way that you all care for each other so well. I could see that this is true and that your school is like a family. It really helps you to be happy, feel safe and grow up well. It was also good to see that you help the adults a great deal by coming to school regularly, behaving excellently, working hard and joining in so well.

The headteacher and staff have worked hard together to improve things where this has been needed and know how to make the school even better. I have asked them to do two things as part of this. One is to make sure that those of you who are really bright are given more difficult work so that you are always challenged further. The other is that, now that they have improved the Reception classrooms so well, they need to make the outside area a better place to play and learn in for the youngest of you.

Very well done to you all and very best wishes

George Rayner

Lead inspector