



Four Marks Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116288
Local Authority Hampshire
Inspection number 290485
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Natalia Power

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Five Lanes End
School category	Voluntary controlled		Four Marks
Age range of pupils	4–11		Alton GU34 5AS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01962 772200
Number on roll (school)	289	Fax number	01962 773648
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Phil Dickinson
		Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Frith
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007	Inspection number 290485
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Four Marks Church of England Primary School is larger than average. It is sited in a rural location. Pupils come to the school from varied backgrounds, but most are white British. More pupils than average are identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes for the most part.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Four Marks Church of England Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The ethos of the school is warm and supportive, not just of pupils but of teachers and learning support assistants, all of whom are valued. Consequently they work as a team and repay the school's trust in them. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, some make good progress particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Measures introduced to raise the achievement of all pupils have not yet worked through to an improvement in standards.

Most parents are satisfied with the education provided by the school, though a small minority have concerns with the progress and behaviour of pupils. Parents commented on the overall supportiveness of the school and found, as one wrote, and;quot;the head and other staff are very helpful and effective in dealing with problems and also very encouraging of children's ideasand;quot;.

Teachers' and learning support assistants' ideas are valued and acted on. Central to the school's success in dealing with pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is the support and focus provided by the team of learning support assistants who cater effectively for pupils' emotional and learning needs.

Pupils begin school with higher than expected skills and go on to make broadly satisfactory progress, leaving school with higher than average standards in the national assessments taken at the end of Year 6. Pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage, which provides children with a good education overall. By the end of Year 2, however, standards have dropped. Measures taken to improve standards at the end of Year 2 are proving successful, but have not yet had time to make a sufficient impact on national assessments. Pupils gain a great deal from school, especially from the very wide range of activities on offer both inside and outside the classroom. The school fosters their personal development well. Pupils feel safe and cared for, and know whom to turn to in case of need. In turn, they respond by behaving well in general, though, when all pupils share the playground, some are less considerate towards younger children.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Pupils' work is carefully marked and their progress is well monitored. Most older pupils are aware of how well they are doing. The school acknowledges that it needs to ensure that activities challenge pupils sufficiently and are matched to what pupils need to learn next. Measures to raise expectations of the higher-ability pupils have not yet had time to make a real impact. Homework set is not always well targeted to the individual child, and this is an area that a number of parents would like addressed.

All leaders and managers clearly show that they want to do the best for each child. Initiatives and measures to improve the school are welcomed by the headteacher. However, the school's self-evaluation is not sufficiently critical and does not make as its focus a relentless drive to improve standards. The governing body shares the school's general aim to improve. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, though middle managers are good. Measures to improve the school such as

encouraging initiative in middle management and the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT), show satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards by making sure that activities match what pupils need to learn next and are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the development planning of the school so that it focuses more systematically on raising pupils' achievements and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils begin and leave school with standards which are above average. Children start school with language skills above those expected for their age and make good initial progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of Year 2, however, overall standards are below average. The fall is most marked in writing and reading.

Pupils catch up and make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6 in English and mathematics. Progress in science is good, particularly for the most able. The large number of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and achieve in line with others. There is no significant difference in the progress made by girls and boys. Higher-attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they should, because they are given insufficient challenge. Measures by the school to raise the standards of these pupils are in place, but have not yet had time to make a full impact.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils enjoy school, as demonstrated in lessons and in the outstanding clubs and extra activities. Pupils are friendly, polite and well-behaved in class but are less considerate at play. They told inspectors they like coming to school because 'teachers are kind and interested in each of us'. They are given opportunities to take responsibility. For example, each new pupil has a 'buddy' and those who joined the school later commented how effective this was and how their 'buddy' became a close friend. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through their involvement in church and village activities. Discussions with pupils show they have good understanding of healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices at lunchtimes. Pupils understand how to stay safe and, when any bullying occurs, it is quickly resolved. Pupils' positive attitudes and developing values prepare them effectively for secondary school and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. In the best lessons pupils are encouraged to concentrate and try hard so that they learn well. In other lessons they are insufficiently challenged. Lessons often have a good introduction, so that pupils know what they are going to learn. Teachers use questioning well, but in some lessons pupils are not required to answer questions in sufficient detail to extend their understanding. ICT is being used far more effectively to improve learning than at the time of the last inspection. Homework does not always ensure that pupils consolidate their learning effectively.

When classes are split into groups, working with a range of adults, pupils often make good progress because the work is more accurately matched to their needs. Pupils benefit from good support and encouragement provided by teaching assistants. Some parents are able to visit and further extend the support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The wide and varied curriculum includes very good support from specialist sports coaches and well-trained learning support assistants. The curriculum takes into account the needs and abilities of many pupils. Its provision for higher-attaining pupils is being improved. Specialist provision for pupils with learning difficulties is particularly good, and effective measures to develop the curriculum for gifted and talented pupils have been put in place. The programme for personal, health, social and citizenship education is well thought out and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and safety.

The curriculum is enhanced by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips and early morning and lunch time clubs, and pupils' participation in these is high. Pupils have very good opportunities to make contributions to both the school and the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers are committed to the pupils, and provide good care, academic guidance and support for them. Pupils know their needs and feelings are important to the school and that teachers respect and look after them well. The school is a safe and friendly environment and pupils form good relationships. Pupils are set helpful targets to encourage them to improve their work. These also help staff to provide good support wherever necessary.

Effective procedures for child protection and safety are in place. The needs of vulnerable pupils are clearly understood. Pupils understand how to stay safe and

procedures are robust. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils receive suitable support. Although some commented that communication could be improved, parents are kept well informed through frequent newsletters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school runs well from day to day. The strength of the headteacher's leadership lies principally in the support and encouragement she provides to all staff to enable them to play a full part in the smooth running of the school. This has created a common sense of purpose among staff to take responsibility for the management of the school. For instance, it has also enabled learning assistants to take on the effective management of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Middle managers show strong leadership. At present the senior leadership does not provide a sufficiently strong and focused drive to build on existing good practice and raise standards for all pupils. The quality of the school's self-evaluation does not sufficiently prioritise where improvement should be most effectively targeted. The governing body is supportive of the school, and measures to act as a critical friend have been put in place. The school works in effective partnership with parents and outside organisations to support its work.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	3
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 us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed hearing how much you like your school and what you do to make it an even better place, such as becoming 'buddies' to new pupils.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. It looks after you well and gives you many opportunities to take part in exciting activities. You told us that you feel safe at school, and like being with the teachers and assistants. You enjoy your lessons and sports. You are usually kind to others and well-behaved, especially in lessons. Do remember to be considerate of other children in the playground, too.

We have asked the adults to make sure that each of you does as well as you possibly can, right through school. To help you to do this, we have asked them to make sure they set you work that is challenging, particularly for those of you who often find work quite easy. All the adults in the school need to make sure they plan carefully to enable this to happen.

With very best wishes for the future from all of us.

Dr Natalia Power

Lead inspector