



Farndon Fields Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119980
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291591
Inspection dates 15–16 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ian Knight

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Argyle Park
School category	Community		Market Harborough
Age range of pupils	4–11		LE16 9JH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01858 464744
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	01858 433253
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Roger Dunton
		Headteacher	Joan Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves the local area of Market Harborough. Almost all pupils are White British. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is about average. The school has been awarded the 'Healthy Schools Award'.

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's motto, 'Value Yourself and Others', aptly describes its warm, welcoming and caring ethos. Pupils understand it and live its meaning. Year 6 pupils act as 'mother hen' to their infant 'buddies' at lunchtimes. They also welcome members of the senior citizens' luncheon club, and chat and play board games with them each week. Academic standards in the school are in the average range and progress is satisfactory, because of teaching that is satisfactory. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory.

Recent improvements in the Foundation Stage mean that provision there is now good and children make good progress. Parents particularly value the sensitive induction into school life. One parent said her daughter had been anxious about starting school but, 'She need not have worried. She is extremely enthusiastic and enjoys school ... she feels confident and safe.' This good start is then consolidated in the rest of the school. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and they make good progress towards their individual targets for improvement. Excellent provision for music, based on staff expertise, was evident when pupils sang and played especially well in assemblies. The school has identified that progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 and in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 was not brisk enough. A renewed emphasis on guided reading across the school led to improvements in standards in Year 2. Improvements in the school's calculation policy have not yet had a measurable impact on outcomes. However, the school accepts that, whilst the curriculum satisfactorily covers the required elements, it could be better organised to reinforce learning and set in context the basic skills of English and mathematics by making stronger links between different subjects. In addition, the school is aware that the most capable are not always enabled to develop the skills to use their existing knowledge and understanding in new situations.

The good care, guidance and support of pupils reinforce their good personal development and well-being. Pupils really enjoy school and behave well. Lessons proceed in an atmosphere of mutual trust with staff and pupils enjoying one another's company. All pupils know just how well they are doing and how to improve because they have rigorous targets set for them which are reinforced in lessons.

The glue which holds everything together is the sound leadership and management provided by the headteacher. Her vision of the school is shared by all staff and the governing body. Satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of the school's work identified areas for development that are addressed in the school improvement plan. However, governors are not involved in its production early enough and the criteria by which its success can be measured lack precision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement, especially in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by making stronger links between subjects of the curriculum, allowing learning to be reinforced, extended and placed in context.

- Improve progress, especially of the most capable pupils, by developing their skills to use and apply existing knowledge to new situations through greater challenge in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Reception with standards that are a little below average. Following good teaching and learning, they enter Year 1 with standards that are slightly above average, representing good achievement. Standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 2 in 2006 improved markedly over the results in 2005, and are average. When considered in the light of their prior attainment, this represents satisfactory progress. Standards in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 fell, although they remain in the average range. The school's statutory targets for performance were not achieved. However, school data confirm that these pupils made satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6, although it was best in reading and slowest in mathematics. Targets for 2007 are challenging, but realistic. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from well written individual plans and effective support from teaching assistants. As a result, they make good progress towards their individual targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour and relationships are good because pupils respond well to the high expectations. Pupils work well together and support each other when unsure of what to do next. They sustain their interest and contribute confidently to discussions. Even the youngest children are capable of working well independently. Pupils understand the importance of keeping themselves fit and healthy. They are willing participants in the many opportunities the school provides. Pupils receive awards for their healthy snacks. They express their views well via the school council, and know that these are valued and often acted upon. They are keen to come to school and attendance is good. Pupils feel safe in school and do not think bullying is a problem. All pupils are encouraged to undertake responsibilities as part of running the school through the school council. Older pupils take their responsibilities towards their infant 'buddies' very seriously indeed. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because opportunities are carefully planned in assemblies and across the curriculum. Pupils are prepared for their future economic well-being through the satisfactory teaching of the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and learning contribute to pupils' sound progress. However, teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Here, the staff successfully adopt a range of teaching styles to engage the children in their learning. Parents agree that very good links involve them closely in their children's learning.

Teachers make effective use of published, exemplar plans, especially in English and mathematics. However, the match of tasks to individual pupils' needs is not always close enough to really challenge the most capable to apply their skills to new situations. When available, teaching assistants are deployed well to support those who may need a little extra help. Teachers do not always make links between subjects that would reinforce learning. However, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, the recent work on the 'Gunpowder Plot' was used well as a stimulus to write from different viewpoints. In most lessons, positive relationships between the teacher and pupils enable lessons to proceed at a brisk pace. However, on occasions, pupils can become restless and inattentive, affecting the pace of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is interesting and stimulates in pupils a desire to learn. However, there are not enough opportunities, particularly in mathematics, for pupils to reinforce their learning by linking it with other areas of the curriculum. Planning does not always challenge the most capable to apply their skills enough. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is exciting and reflects the interests of the children. Daily routines are used well to enable children to extend their learning. Throughout the school, all aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are thoroughly covered. Pupils' personal, social and health education is fully addressed. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their lessons and the many exciting educational visits, which, along with visitors to the school, extend the pupils' learning. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to make music together and appreciate a range of musical styles. Pupils participate in a range of exciting musical productions. There is a wide range of well attended after school activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for child protection and safe guarding pupils are thorough and effective. A supportive pastoral system contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of learning and to their general well-being. Good links are made with other professionals and services to support the care and welfare of pupils. A very good induction programme for children entering Reception ensures that they quickly settle into the life of the school. A team of very dedicated staff supports the needs

of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The coordinator ensures that such pupils feel valued and gain confidence in their learning. Teachers monitor the performance of pupils satisfactorily. They ensure that pupils, and their parents, know their targets and what they need to do to improve. The school is very good at consulting pupils to gain and respond to their views about the education they receive and how it might be improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management ensure that pupils make sound progress throughout the school. All individuals in the school are valued and there is a clear culture of teamwork. In addition, when progress in the Foundation Stage was found to be too slow, effective action was taken and provision is now good. This indicates that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and strengths and weaknesses, for example in the level of challenge for the most capable, are known and appropriate action is planned. However, consultation on the school improvement plan is not wide enough. Governors are not involved early enough and the criteria by which the success of targets will be measured are not sufficiently precise.

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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	3
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	3

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?	3
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	3
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 very much for being so polite and helpful when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you in lessons and around the school. A special thanks to the members of the school council who came to speak with us, and to the pupils in Years 2 and 6 who let us look at their books.

We think that, although your school does some things really well, it needs to improve some others before it is a good school. At the moment, it is satisfactory. The best things about the school are how well looked after you are and how well you behave. You told us how you really enjoy coming to school. All of you learn at about the right speed, but children in Reception and those who need a bit of extra help do even better. To help you all do as well, we have asked the school to try to make sure that you can practise the things you are learning in English and mathematics in other subjects to help you learn better. We think that those of you who learn fastest could be given harder work that helps you use things you have already learned in different ways. You can help by always trying your best, even if some lessons seem a bit different to how they were before.