

# Faringdon Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123061
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292572
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 July 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joanna Cave
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003
<b>School address</b>	The Elms Gloucester Street Faringdon SN7 7HZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01367 240232
<b>Fax number</b>	01367 240232

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is in a small market town and is average in size for a primary. Most pupils start in Year 3 on transfer from the nearby infant school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin with a few from a range of different minority ethnic groups. Pupils' social and economic circumstances are wide-ranging but are broadly average overall. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities or statements of special educational needs is slightly above average. Almost all pupils speak English as a home language.

## 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 and improving school, where pupils achieve well and thoroughly enjoy their education. It is a warm and welcoming community where pupils succeed academically and socially. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent, they have very positive relationships with each other and with staff, and work hard. Pupils know a lot about healthy lifestyles and are keen on exercise. They understand how to keep themselves safe, and are keen to help others. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and say their children are very happy there.

Standards are above average, a significant improvement since the last inspection. Improvements in the last two years mean that pupils' progress has increased across the school, particularly in writing. The emphasis on providing more interesting contexts for writing has raised standards substantially. However, a recent focus on handwriting and spelling has not yet made enough impact. Spelling skills do not match other aspects of pupils' writing, and many pupils do not yet write in a consistently joined style.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers ensure that lessons are lively and meaningful, so that pupils describe them as fun. Classes are managed very well. Teachers give pupils extensive opportunities to work collaboratively and to discuss things together. This strongly supports their enthusiasm and achievement. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are going to do in lessons, but do not always give them clear enough criteria for success. Marking is thorough and acknowledges pupils' progress, but does not consistently show them how they might improve. There is a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum that promotes pupils' learning and personal development well. There are particular strengths in music, art and information and communication technology.

The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are good. Their academic progress is tracked and analysed carefully, and information is used well to provide for individuals' needs. Pastoral care for pupils is strong and is greatly appreciated by parents and their children alike.

The school is well led and managed. Improvements in achievement in the last year have been built on increased consistency in teaching, helped by effective monitoring which has enabled staff to improve their practice. Similarly, improved tracking of pupils' progress has enabled the school to identify any weaknesses, refine and improve the curriculum, and provide effective support to individual pupils.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in handwriting and spelling to match the good quality of other aspects of pupils' writing.
- Ensure more consistency in giving pupils clear criteria for success in their work, and showing them, through marking, how they can improve it.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Overall results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 were average in the years up to 2006, representing satisfactory progress from pupils' broadly average standards when they started. Writing was a relative weakness compared to other subjects, and reading and mathematics were strong. Provisional results for 2007 are

better and are above last year's averages, except in the number of pupils gaining high scores in writing. This still represents good progress, as very few of this group had high writing scores when they started in the school.

The school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress reveals significant improvements in the last two years. Many pupils have made above the expected progress, especially in the older classes. The improvement in writing is particularly strong, most notably during last year when the whole school focused on this subject. There are still weaknesses in spelling and handwriting. The school sets challenging targets each year and, in 2007, met or exceeded most of them. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress because of the well-managed support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Relationships between adults and pupils are very harmonious and are based on mutual respect. Pupils value the fact that they participate strongly in decisions about school life and that their voices are heard. Pupils have excellent relationships, get along easily with each other and enjoy working collaboratively. They are polite and friendly, welcoming visitors to the school with enthusiasm. They take great pride in undertaking responsibilities, for example, for younger children or the appearance of classrooms. Pupils understand that school rules are necessary but say that most people behave very well because they value their teachers and appreciate the fact that they receive praise for what they do well. They involve themselves with interest and enthusiasm with local events, and with members of the local community. The 'Green Team' show strong leadership qualities by setting an example in encouraging a range of eco-friendly practices. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is much improved, and they are very positive about their link with a school in Uganda. Their good spiritual development is boosted by a wide range of art and musical activities, extensive environmental work and sensitively led school worship. Their excellent attitudes and good basic skills prepare them very well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The positive working atmosphere in lessons is founded on very good relationships between pupils and staff. Year 3 confirmed that, 'Teachers are very kind and funny'. Pupils work hard and are keen to learn because they know their efforts are appreciated, and that they are valued as individuals. Teachers make increasingly good use of the improved data on pupils' progress to match work closely to their needs. Pupils' strong collaborative skills are put to good use in many lessons, when their learning is enhanced by good opportunities to discuss their work. The adults monitor pupils' progress well during lessons, challenging them to refine their work and asking searching questions to get them to think through their ideas. The increased consistency of teaching in the last two years has made a strong contribution to pupils' improved achievement. However, there are still inconsistencies in explaining precisely to pupils the success criteria for their work, and in marking.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is increasingly imaginative, capturing pupils' interest and contributing well to their very good attitudes to learning. Standards are rising because pupils are engaged and appreciate the relevance of what they learn. One pupil said, 'The way we learn builds our confidence in ourselves'. Standards of written work have improved because pupils are given a range of real and exciting reasons for writing. A good range of clubs, visits out and visitors to school provide additional enrichment. A visit by local veterans of World War II resulted in lively written accounts of discussions and provided a stimulus for work in history. The curriculum contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. Problem-solving activities and links with other schools, locally as well in other countries, develop important skills for life and broaden pupils' understanding of global issues. Good provision is made for many aspects of the arts, music being particularly strong. Pupils understand how to acquire a healthy life style through their involvement in physical activities and a healthy eating initiative.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and supported to get the best out of their school experiences. Attendance is, therefore, good. There are good procedures to ensue safety which are understood by the pupils. Parents praise the high level of care provided for their children so that they thrive in school. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Pupils are given good guidance on how to look after themselves and to be aware of the needs of others. This was much in evidence during the school lunch hour. Assessment is used well to guide pupils' academic development. The tracking of pupils' progress over time shows increasing rigour to ensure that appropriate guidance is available at the time it is needed. Pupils are given targets to aim for in English and mathematics, and review them regularly. The activities of the local partnership of schools also ensure that pupils are well supported when they move from one phase of education to the next. Good support provided to pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities promotes their good progress. Pupils who are new to English are given effective help to develop their language skills and also to feel at home in a new environment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides very clear leadership to an enthusiastic and hard-working team of staff. Efforts are clearly focused on raising standards through lively teaching and an exciting curriculum, as well as providing high levels of care for individuals. This has promoted pupils' outstanding personal development and their improved progress. Good procedures for self-evaluation mean the school is well placed to improve further. Rigorous monitoring of teaching, planning and pupils' work has led to greater consistency in teaching. The results of improved assessment procedures have been thoroughly analysed by the deputy headteacher, to give a clear picture of pupils' progress and standards. This has enabled the school to provide extra help to any pupils who are not doing as well as they should. It has also helped identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, which staff have worked very effectively to address. The three 'curriculum teams' are enabling the different subjects to be monitored and supported well. The resultant collaborative work by staff is strongly supporting

a cross-curricular approach to teaching, which improves pupils' enjoyment as well as their learning. Governors have good systems to give them a clear understanding of the needs of the school, and take a full part in its management.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

3 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Faringdon Junior School, Faringdon, SN7 7HZ

Thank you for all your help when we visited FJS. We enjoyed watching you at work and talking to you. You told us that you really enjoy school and we could see why. We agree that you go to a good school.

We thought your behaviour was excellent. We were particularly impressed by how well you all get on together and help each other, both in class and outside. You work hard in lessons and really seem to throw yourselves into things with enthusiasm. I enjoyed the singing rehearsal I heard, and seeing you practising so hard and sensibly for sports day. We were only sorry that we didn't have time to watch the performance, but your teachers told us you did brilliantly. You are growing into sensible, caring and friendly people, that your parents and teachers can be really proud of.

You are learning a lot at school because your teachers are good at teaching you. Standards have gone up in the last two years, and most of you are now doing better than in most schools we see. Your writing has got better over the last year because your teachers have worked hard at this and given you lots of interesting things to write about. We have agreed with your teachers that they will work next year on improving your spelling and handwriting to match the interesting content of what you write. Your teachers are very good at explaining what you are going to do, but we have asked them to try to explain more carefully in lessons what could make your work really special. We have also asked them to write more in their marking to show you how to make your work better.

The adults in the school organise it well. They take great care to make sure you are safe and happy. They keep a careful eye on how everyone is getting on, and make sure that anyone who is struggling gets extra help. They are determined to make the school even better, and we are sure you will help them with this, especially by working hard at your handwriting and spelling. We hope you carry on enjoying school.

Thank you again for all your help.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill Lead Inspector