

Farringdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133344
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	294076
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	345
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Clough
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Henderson
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	Archer Road Farringdon Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR3 3DJ
Telephone number	0191 5535994
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out over two days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Farringdon Primary School, which is bigger than the average sized primary school, serves an area with above-average levels of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. The vast majority of the pupils are White British.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Farringdon Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education in all areas, except in relation to students' achievement and standards, which are both inadequate. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards.

There has been a decline in pupils' performance since 2004, most significantly in 2006 when the school's results in national tests were exceptionally low in all areas at both Key Stages 1 and 2. Following a period of instability among senior staff during 2006, when the previous headteacher took early retirement because of ill health, an associate headteacher was appointed in September of the same year. At around the same time, the local authority co-opted two governors, both retired headteachers, to help support the school and the governing body to make the necessary improvements. In late October, the associate headteacher was appointed permanently to the school. Many developments have occurred since then, which have been well received by pupils, parents, staff and governors. Although the school's assessments and 2007 unpublished test results indicate that standards are still below average at all key stages, the school is beginning to show signs of improvement in some key areas, including pupils' standards and progress. However, further improvements are needed across the school in order to consolidate these early developments.

The new headteacher has rigorously tackled three areas in order to make improvements: raising standards at all key stages; improving the quality of teaching and learning; and, improving the curricular provision. Teaching is now at least satisfactory, and some is occasionally good. However, in order for the school to ensure that standards continue to improve across the school, the quality of teaching has to improve further, especially through better use of the pupils' achievements from lessons and other activities to plan more challenging work for all abilities. The start to mapping the curriculum is proving to be very helpful in identifying any gaps in provision for the core subjects, but this work has yet to build fully upon pupils' prior learning. While this approach to planning is helping to ensure the pupils' entitlement to the key skills in English, mathematics and science, there are some classes in the school where the opportunities for pupils to experience other subjects are more limited. However, pupils were unequivocal, when talking with inspectors, in their praise for the changes that have occurred since September. Their attendance, which had a declining trend of below average from 2004, has moved to broadly average this year. In other aspects of the school's work, provision is generally satisfactory. Adults continue to care and support the pupils satisfactorily, and, in turn, the pupils show good standards of behaviour in and out of lessons. The pupils are beginning, also, to appreciate more about the importance of maintaining and improving their personal well-being, not least in terms of awareness about being, and staying healthy.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, and improvements are being made. Middle and senior managers recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and, driven on by the headteacher, working practices of observing teaching and analysing pupils' performance are beginning to develop. However, more needs to be done by all staff in the school in order to support the headteacher, especially those who hold management responsibilities. The governing body is developing also, helped by the appointment of two new governors, both of whom use their expertise to very good effect. Regular 'challenge meetings'

now take place between the governing body, the headteacher and with a local authority link officer. The agenda is clearly focused on measuring progress against actions in the school's plan for improvement. While this is effective practice in supporting the school, the plan needs clearer milestones, timescales and costs in order to aid senior managers and governors to assess progress and value for money more accurately. The agenda for improvement is clear, and expectations from all those associated with the school, not least the pupils and their parents, are rising. Accordingly, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards at the Foundation Stage, and Key Stages 1 and 2, to ensure that pupils make better progress during their time at the school.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers make better and more consistent use of information about pupils' prior learning.
- Develop a better balance of curricular provision across all classes.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of middle and senior managers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' standards and achievement are both inadequate. The vast majority of children start at the school in nursery with a range of personal skills and attributes that are below what would be expected for their age. During the Foundation Stage, the children make satisfactory progress, which means that by the time they reach the start of statutory schooling the majority are still below the levels expected for a five-year-old. In 2006, standards in national assessments at Key Stage 1 were exceptionally low in reading, writing and mathematics, having declined significantly from the previous year. This trend in declining standards has occurred in reading and writing since 2004, with the performance of boys significantly lower than girls. In the national tests at Key Stage 2 in 2006, standards were also exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science, having declined significantly from the previous year. The downward trend in performance has occurred in English and mathematics since 2004, with girls' performing significantly worse than boys in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make inadequate overall progress. However, the early available evidence from this year's teacher assessments at Foundation Stage and from the national tests and assessments indicates that, although standards are still below average, the downward trend has been arrested, and for most pupils' at least satisfactory progress is now being made. These improvements have yet to be consistently established across the whole school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school because they say that lessons are now more interesting and fun; there are more things do at breaks, lunchtimes and after school, and staff are more helpful. Pupils feel safe because adults in the school are helping them to develop their understanding about the possible risks to their well-being, particularly in areas such as the dangers posed by strangers. Pupils hold positive views about the school: they can make friends easily and bullying is a rare occurrence. Pupils know that it is important to show positive attitudes to each other and not display racist attitudes; there have been no recorded incidents of bullying or racism this year. Pupils' knowledge about adopting healthier lifestyles is developing satisfactorily, and some are taking advantage of the

opportunities for regular exercise through an increasing range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils also know about the importance of eating healthy foods in maintaining their physical well-being. Behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good. Pupils are attentive, listen well to teachers' instructions and play well together. Pupils show consideration for others, as seen for example, when using the recently installed outdoor climbing equipment. Older pupils, in particular, are thoughtful and courteous to the younger children. Attendance, which had previously been below average and declining since 2004, has improved over the course of this year and is now broadly average. Pupils respond well to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They sing well together, listen carefully when prayers are being said and enter and leave the hall for assembly in an orderly manner.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and the pupils respond positively to this. Relationships are good and, as a result, pupils are able to enjoy their learning. Teachers have recently introduced various techniques like brainstorming in groups, talking ideas through with partners, and 'hot-seating' for role play to test out ideas and help improve the pupils' learning, both in attitude and what they achieve. Although these strategies make lessons more engaging and interesting, they have not yet had sufficient impact on standards and progress because some teachers fail to check consistently on all pupils in the lessons to ensure that they have understood what is required of them, and that they are making sufficient progress in line with their abilities. Occasionally, also, too much teacher talk gives pupils too little time to express themselves and opportunities are missed to develop understanding. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and, although lesson activities are mostly sequenced and ordered appropriately, there is insufficient attention given to pupils' prior learning by some teachers. As a result, some lessons are not as challenging as they should be, especially for the higher attainers. In these lessons, the pace of learning slows so pupils lose concentration and do not do as well as they could. Learning support assistants are generally used well in lessons to support pupils in their work, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The new headteacher quickly assessed that the curriculum needed to be developed to order to help raise standards and improve pupils' progress. As a result, a curricular map has been developed across the core subjects to identify the essential teaching content necessary to comply with national guidance and meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum is now focused heavily on providing lessons in English, mathematics and science in order to improve pupils' abilities in the basic skills of these areas. However, this has resulted in a timetable for some pupils that is limited in its coverage of other subjects and thus lacks curricular balance. The curricular provision is developing, but ensuring continuity in pupils' learning from one year to the next is underdeveloped. Throughout the year the curriculum is enriched by various visits and visitors that help bring a practical aspect to pupils' learning. Out-of-lesson opportunities to participate in dance, choir, art and information and communication technology add to pupils' interests and abilities, and are helping them to develop positive attitudes towards school. For example, a recently held revision class in preparation for

national tests, run voluntarily by staff at Easter, was appreciated and well received by parents and pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school's procedures for safeguarding, including child protection, are clear and comply with statutory requirements. Senior staff responsible for safeguarding are appropriately trained, and all adults who work in the school receive regular, updated training in procedures and practices for working with children. The school is sensitive to the needs of its pupils, and takes all reasonable actions to ensure their personal well-being and safety in everything they do. Adults who work in the school provide satisfactory care and support, which gives the pupils a sense of confidence and safety by knowing that there is an adult they can talk to about any personal issues they have. Older pupils also contribute to this aspect by acting as 'playground buddies'. The clearly identified 'flag meeting point' in the playground helps pupils who may be troubled or feel isolated to find a friend, or access support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are satisfactorily supported in lessons through targeted individual support. The school's use of learning targets is firmly based on improving the basic skills in literacy and numeracy, as an aid to raising standards and improving pupils' progress in these core subjects. Teachers make regular use of these learning targets when marking pupils' work books, which is helping the pupils to know what they must do in order to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has quickly identified the key areas of weakness that have been the cause of the exceptionally low standards and inadequate progress over the past two years. A clear vision for the school has been developed, and is focused on raising standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum, and leadership and management. The school's plan for improvement is satisfactory, although further refinements to the timescales, milestones and costs would help senior managers and governors to assess progress and value for money over the life of the plan more effectively. Targeted actions to improve the quality of leadership and management are beginning to make a difference; for example, the challenge to ineffective teaching by establishing a regular system to monitor, assess and evaluate the quality of teaching has already identified areas for improvement. However, the headteacher and governors recognise that many of the actions taken since September remain at an early stage of implementation, with some senior and middle managers still needing to develop their experience and expertise in order to contribute more fully to the actions for improvement. The headteacher has introduced effective systems for improving behaviour, which have created a good ethos for learning, and helped raised pupils' levels of interest in school. This is reflected in pupils' attendance, which is now broadly average, having been below average for the past three years. Staff appreciate these developments, and parents and pupils are wholly supportive of the changes that have occurred since last September. Although there is still much work to do, not least to raise pupils' standards and improve their rate of progress during their time in the school, the emerging signs of improvement are welcomed by governors and the local authority. The governing body is satisfactorily fulfilling its range of roles and responsibilities. Recent appointments have helped build better capacity and provided

additional expertise that is being put to very good use in helping to challenge the school to make the improvements required. Overall, the school now has a headteacher and governing body who are taking action to improve the quality of provision, which means that there is satisfactory capacity to make future improvements. However, because pupils' standards and achievements are inadequate, the school currently provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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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>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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.

Annex A

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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farringdon Primary School, Sunderland, SR3 3DJ

You will know that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors to see how well you are doing at Farringdon Primary School. Over two days, the inspectors found out about many of the things you enjoy doing, and some of the things that you feel are good about attending the school. I should like to thank all of you for the way you behaved in lessons, at breaks and lunchtime, and your willingness to talk openly and honestly about being a pupil at the school. I should also like to thank your parents for returning a questionnaire about the school, particularly those who wrote comments, which inspectors read very carefully.

You know that many things have changed since last September. All of you who spoke with inspectors said that Farringdon is a much better school now than it was at the beginning of the year. Almost everyone said that attending the school is enjoyable because lessons are fun, and you like doing well and being told about your successes by the teachers. We know that this is helping many more of you attend school more regularly. Well done to you all.

Although many things about the school are improving, the standards and progress that you make are far too low. This means that we are making a special recommendation that inspectors will visit Farringdon again, within the next 12 months, to find out how much the school has improved, and whether all of you are doing as well as you can in your lessons. To help your school improve, we are asking that your teachers do the following:

- improve the standard of your work in all classes to help all of you make better progress;
- improve teaching by ensuring that better use is made of all the information that teachers have about your successes in lessons, and the other activities that you do in school;
- make sure that you are taught all the different subjects that will make attending the school even more enjoyable and interesting;
- make sure that the headteacher and other senior staff visit lessons regularly to ensure that all of you do as well as you can in your work.

All of you have a very important part to play in helping your school to improve. You need to attend regularly, work hard and do the very best that you can in all of your lessons.

I wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Lead inspector