

Farnborough Road Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104863
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	307261
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Margot D'Arcy

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ralph Gregson
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Cheetham
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2003
School address	Farnborough Road Birkdale Southport Merseyside PR8 3DF
Telephone number	01704 577637
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The vast majority of pupils at this large infant school are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A very small number is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average and the proportion taking free school meals is average. There is a range of attainment on entry to the Nursery but, overall, standards are mainly in line with what is expected of children this age.

A new headteacher was appointed 18 months ago after an unsettled period at leadership level in the school.

The school has received the Healthy School Award and gained the Artsmark Silver status.

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. It has some outstanding features. The curriculum is excellent. It is meticulously planned and firmly rooted in the staff's good knowledge of how young children learn. A wealth of practical experiences that exploit relevant links between different subjects ensures learning is meaningful and promotes pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school. Together with good quality teaching and an outstanding level of care, guidance and support, the school's provision is significant in pupils' good standards of personal development and academic achievement. The result is that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average and rising.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and achieve well. It is here that children's enjoyment of school begins. Good teaching ensures children develop independence, appropriate work habits and a solid grounding in basic skills. There are plenty of opportunities for children to explore and learn through play, including extensive and well-organised resources for outdoor learning. However, whilst children enjoy playing outdoors, their learning is not always taken forward as well as it could be in these sessions. There are weaknesses in the quality of intervention from staff to exploit learning through play so that some outdoor sessions differ little from those at playtime or lunchtime.

The school's success in achieving the Healthy School Award is clearly seen in pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. They talk knowledgeably about the need for a balanced diet, getting plenty of exercise and enough sleep. Older pupils are also beginning to recognise that talking through problems and understanding their feelings 'will help our minds to be healthy'. The school's excellent pastoral support and guidance is making a particularly good contribution to this aspect of pupils' development. It also provides a clear structure to guide pupils' moral development and improve behaviour, which, for the majority, is good. Whilst some pupils express concerns about behaviour, most say that they feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers as friends and protectors. Typical comments included, 'teachers are patient and look after us' and 'we have lovely teachers who help us learn'. The good opportunities provided for pupils to take on responsibilities and to understand and control aspects of their own learning add much to their personal development and prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.

Good leadership and management underpin the school's successes. Leadership from the headteacher is outstanding and evident in many ways. Notably in the higher standards attained by Year 2 pupils in this year's national assessments, especially in areas specifically targeted for improvement. A recently restructured management team is developing well and widening the school's capacity to monitor and evaluate its work. Overall, self-evaluation is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching during the outdoor sessions in the Foundation Stage so that children learn as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. From a broadly average starting point children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. By the time they are ready to begin Year 1 most have attained the expected goals in all areas of learning. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. The current group of Year 2 pupils are attaining above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This represents particularly good improvement in reading and mathematics where standards over time have generally been average. The improvements have occurred because the school targeted specific groups of pupils and subjects, such as boys' reading and middle attainers' numeracy skills, for additional support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is because excellent provision is made for them through specific intervention programmes, additional adult help, and extremely effective links with specialist support agencies. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress in developing their language skills and in other subjects across the curriculum. Throughout the school, particularly good standards of work are also seen in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), and art and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' excellent enjoyment of school is clearly evident. It is reflected in their good attendance and the enthusiasm with which they throw themselves into the wide range of practical activities and play opportunities. Pupils are lively and demanding, but most behave admirably when involved in challenging tasks or are occupied using the outdoor play resources at break times. Pupils' attention wanders and some misbehaviour occurs when they have to sit and listen for too long in lessons or queue in the canteen at lunchtime. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with some outstanding features. For example, Year 2 pupils were fascinated by the beauty of a passionflower and listened, awestruck, to a flute performance whilst reflecting on 'beautiful things'. Pupils understand the school's simple rules and recognise that they are there 'so that everyone can get on together'. They contribute well to their school taking on various responsibilities, such as school councillors, playground pals and class helpers. Pupils' appreciation of different cultures is fostered very well through the arts and in religious education. Pupils also learn how they can add to the wider community, for instance, by fund-raising for good causes and sharing their talents through performances.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Typically, teachers plan in detail making good provision for the range of needs in their classes by adapting work or through the level of adult support. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong, as is their understanding of the ways in which young children learn best. In all lessons there is a strong focus on providing practical activities so that pupils learn through exploration and first-hand experience. Pupils' liveliness and exuberance demand a lot from teachers. However, most have good skills in managing behaviour and a wide range of methods and organisational strategies at their fingertips to keep pupils focused and ensure learning moves along at a good pace. Now and then, behaviour is not

managed as well as it could be or teachers are not quick enough to detect that pupils have become bored with sitting and listening. In these instances, learning dips to satisfactory and some pupils begin to misbehave. The impact of teaching assistants is good. Many are skilled practitioners complementing well teachers' work in classes and successfully delivering a number of 'catch up' programmes. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is mostly good, but during outdoor provision there are times when the level of staff involvement does not go beyond supervision and this limits children's learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's outstanding curriculum has a marked effect on pupils' enjoyment of learning and their all-round development. The strong focus on creativity is seen in pupils' high quality artwork and their expression through dance and music. Superb links are made between subjects. For example, scientific knowledge is reinforced during a dance lesson and pupils' exploration of historical artefacts is reflected in high quality observational drawings. There are many opportunities for pupils to investigate scientific ideas, mathematical problems and design activities in lessons and classroom challenge corners. Basic skills of speaking, listening, literacy, numeracy and ICT are continually reinforced alongside some exceptional provision for pupils' personal development. The outcome is pupils who are confident, articulate, and willing to apply their learning thoughtfully and creatively. Real experiences make learning come alive. This was seen in the Nursery where children sat captivated by the story of the Ugly Duckling as they gently cradled eggs in their hands, and when Reception children marvelled as they observed mini-beasts. A wide range of clubs, additional activities and visitors, including specialist support in the arts and PE, enriches the curriculum. Intervention programmes to boost learning and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are of very good quality and have a particularly effective impact on these pupils' progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are very appreciative of the outstanding care, guidance and support given to their children. Very careful attention is paid to all health and safety issues and child protection procedures are in place. The school works exceptionally well with outside agencies to ensure all pupils are fully supported. Induction arrangements for new starters are very good and well focused on making children feel safe and cared for. Transition arrangements for Year 2 pupils to the junior school are also extremely good and pupils particularly like being able to meet their new teachers when they come to visit them. Year 2 pupils say that they will be sorry to leave the school, but are excited about moving to the juniors explaining, 'it's good to make new friends in different classes'. Good academic guidance is provided to pupils through regular discussion, quality marking and the setting of individual improvement targets. Pupils know their targets and what they must do to achieve them. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in the process of understanding their own learning, frequently assessing how well they think they have learned in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management are key factors in the school's success. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has created a climate where everyone is focused on improving the school further. Since her appointment, the headteacher's very precise analysis and evaluation of pupils' performance has driven forward improvements to standards. The headteacher is admired and respected by staff who respond enthusiastically to the way she values their work and involves them in the management of the school. The senior leadership team is a committed and sharp group of people whose skills in monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance and the school's work are developing well. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are an important element of the effective team approach and have gained a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their involvement in the self-evaluation process. The school is committed to providing all pupils with the opportunity to fulfil their potential, setting them on the right track to lead healthy, safe and fulfilling lives.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	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	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to us. We very much enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. I am sure you will be glad to hear that we agreed with you and judged Farnborough Infants to be a good school. Consequently, we have only asked your school to improve one thing. This is the way that teachers help children in the Foundation Stage to learn as well as they can when they work outdoors.

We were impressed with many things, but one thing that really pleased us was how much you all enjoy school. This is hardly surprising, however, because you are given so many exciting and interesting things to do. The teachers and other staff are good at thinking up ideas to make your learning interesting and to challenge you all so that you achieve good standards. This obviously works because we found that as well as being good readers, writers, mathematicians and scientists you also produce some fantastic artwork, are good on computers and perform extremely well in dance and music. The staff also take exceptionally good care of you, helping you understand how to keep healthy and safe, be responsible, and to consider other people as well as yourselves.

Your headteacher, the governors and all the staff are always working hard to make your school even better. You can do your bit to help by continuing to work as hard as you can in lessons and remembering to behave well at all times.

On behalf of the inspection team I send our very best wishes to you all.