

Farnborough Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101615
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307757
Inspection date	2 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheena MacDonald 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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs N Kimber
Headteacher	Ms P Farrow
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Farnborough Hill Farnborough Orpington BR6 7EQ
Telephone number	01689 853295
Fax number	01689 889286

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	2 July 2008
Inspection number	307757

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether the school has taken effective action to raise attainment in mathematics and that of more able pupils; progress made in the Foundation stage; outcomes in pupils' personal development and the effectiveness of leaders and managers in evaluating and pursuing areas identified for improvement. Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and break-times; the school's documentation, particularly on pupils' achievements; interviews with staff, governors and pupils; results of national assessments; samples of pupils' work; and parental views as expressed in questionnaires.

Description of the school

Farnborough is a one-form entry school which serves its local village and surrounding area. The area is relatively affluent and, as a result, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are White British and very few have English as an additional language. There are just below average numbers of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The school has achieved a number of external awards including Investors in People, Activemark, Healthy Schools Award, Artsmark silver, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Quality Mark in Study Support and Eco School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Farnborough is a good school. There is a strong ethos of seeking out, developing and celebrating the individual achievements of all pupils. Standards are above average and pupils make good progress both academically and in their personal development. The school enjoys a friendly atmosphere where, as one parent put it, 'no one goes unnoticed.' The outstanding level of care, guidance and support for pupils is a strength of the school. Individual needs and talents, both academic and social, are swiftly identified and appropriately provided for.

Pupils arrive with very varying abilities but, on average, these are at national expectations. They make good progress and move into Year 1 achieving just above average across all aspects. For several years until 2007, there was a worrying downward trend in attainment in all key stages and, although standards remained just above average, progress made by pupils was too slow. The school reversed this trend in 2007 and has successfully maintained the improvements during this academic year. Standards are above average in English and science and improving in mathematics, and the progress pupils make is good.

A whole school focus on improving writing has paid off. Teachers have become very skilful in assessing writing and pinpointing the next steps for improvement. There is good evidence of high quality writing around the school and in the recent Key Stage 1 national assessments, the number achieving at the highest level shot up. Several pupils commented on how much they enjoy writing and that was evident in a Year 2 class where pupils were being skilfully guided by the teacher to use interesting words to describe what the wizard might have in his pocket.

Mathematics has been the relatively weaker area for some years. The school is beginning to tackle this and much groundwork has been done to develop teachers' subject knowledge and improve the quality of lesson planning. Evidence from lessons, assessments and pupils' books shows that attainment in mathematics is improving. Progress is good particularly in Year 2 and at the end of Key Stage 2 but slower at the beginning of Key Stage 2. The level of skill teachers show in using assessment in writing is not yet as evident in mathematics.

Personal development and wellbeing are good and pupils become confident, articulate young people well prepared for the next stage in their journey. Although they are knowledgeable about how to stay healthy, and are enthusiastic participants in the many opportunities for physical activities, the contents of some of the lunchboxes tell a different story. Pupils enjoy and feel safe in school and attendance is good. Pupils of all ages are keen to make their own personal contribution through performing shows in the community, raising money for charities and, particularly as they get older, taking on a wide range of responsibilities. They enthusiastically take up the opportunities provided by special events and theme days to develop good team working skills and independence but these skills are less evident in everyday school life.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good. Lessons are characterised by good relationships and a good sprinkling of humour. In the best lessons, teachers are using steps for success to describe what successful learning might look like and pupils commented on how this helps them know what to do to improve their work. Teachers make good use of questions to extend the learning of different groups and, in most lessons, there are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and try out different strategies. Mathematics lessons are improving and becoming better adapted to meet the needs of different ability groups. Pupils that are more able are given challenging activities to extend their learning, but the quality of this is

inconsistent. The school uses a good range of external expertise to develop pupils' skills in many areas and there are many enrichment opportunities, which enliven the curriculum. The day-to-day provision is not quite so interesting or motivating and the school is rightly planning to review and improve the curriculum further.

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team is enthusiastic and work well together with a good range of developing and complementary skills. Governors are well informed, know the school increasingly well, provide good support and some challenge. Senior leaders use assessment and monitoring information well to identify strengths and weaknesses. However, the focus of improvement planning tends to be on what the adults will do rather than on what pupils need to achieve. This means that improvement activity is not sharply enough focused on achieving specific targets in pupil attainment and success is hard to measure. Senior leaders have demonstrated that when they do sharpen the focus and vigorously tackle an area of underperformance such as writing they can bring about good improvements. This and improvements in standards and achievement demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The reception class is an interesting place where there is always the chance that something exciting will happen. During the inspection, two butterflies hatched and children, despite their evident excitement, were well able to use the correct language to describe the process. The staff work well together and there are well-established routines, which help children feel safe, enjoy each other's company and develop confidence as learners. Good use is made of observations to assess children's attainment and progress across all the areas of learning is good. Successful action has been taken to improve progress in aspects such as linking sounds and letters and creative development, where progress in the past had been slower. There are good opportunities for children to explore learning in practical ways such as in the Travel Agent role-play area. Adult directed activities are well planned. However, opportunities for pupils to initiate or extend their own learning and the use of outdoor learning would benefit from further development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and progress in mathematics to match those achieved in English.
- Ensure that improvement planning has a sharper focus on raising standards and improving progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farnborough Primary School, Orpington, BR6 7EQ

As you know, I visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to me. You, and your parents, told me that you go to a good school and I agree.

I was particularly impressed with the way in which everyone, including you, knows and looks after each other. Adults work hard to make sure everyone is safe and always has someone to turn to if they need to. You behave well and get on well together. I could see that you are very enthusiastic about school life, especially the clubs and special events. You told me how much you enjoyed those times when lessons were a bit more lively than usual and when you can show you are up for new challenges.

The standards you reach and the progress you make are good, especially in English. Your writing has really improved this year because of all the work your teachers have done to improve writing lessons. You have done your bit too and I saw some great examples during my visit. For example, Year 2 used interesting adjectives when they were deciding what might be in a wizard's pocket. You don't achieve quite so well in mathematics and the school has started to do something about that too. Things are beginning to improve and but there is more to do in mathematics so that you do as well in it as you do in English.

The leaders in your school are doing a good job. They know what is good and what needs to improve but sometimes they are so enthusiastic that when they are planning to improve things they get caught up in what they need to do rather than on what you are doing! I have asked them to make sure that school improvement plans focus very sharply on your progress and achievements.

Thank you again for helping to make my time in your school so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely,

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector