

Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116154
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312192
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Audrey Caldeira-Hankey
Headteacher	Miss Kath Greenway
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Cherry Tree Close Farnborough GU14 9TT
Telephone number	01252 548003
Fax number	01252 518380

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how successfully boys and girls of different abilities and backgrounds learn. The inspector focused on how well pupils use their personal, social and independent skills to the benefit of the school and to improve their own learning. He also checked on how well leaders, managers and governors ensure consistency in teaching and learning throughout the school. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of the school's performance, scrutiny of pupils' work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with the headteacher, governors, parents and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils have White British heritage although around ten per cent have other ethnic minority backgrounds. A small proportion of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is low; most of these pupils have speech and language difficulties and a small number have autistic tendencies. The headteacher has been in post for a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides high quality education that enables pupils of all abilities to thrive. As one parent wrote, 'Parsonage is a happy school and my children have both benefited from being in this caring and friendly environment.' Indeed, the high levels of care and support ensure that pupils make excellent progress, not only in their studies but also in developing strong personal qualities, which stand them in good stead for the future. Pupils work hard, use their initiative, work independently and thoroughly enjoy all the school offers.

The school has been successful for many years in ensuring that pupils attain high standards especially in reading. This year, with an emphasis on improving knowledge of sounds and letters, the staff have enhanced the pupils' skills in reading and writing, and standards have improved further. Much of the success is due to well-focused and challenging teaching that meets the needs of all. Those with specific learning needs, such as developing communication skills, are very well supported and grow in confidence in using basic skills. Others with physical and emotional difficulties receive high quality support that enables them to participate fully in all of the school's activities. Teachers plan exciting lessons and learning is often very practical so that pupils quickly grasp new ideas. Together with the support assistants, they are skilful in asking probing questions that challenge the pupils and move learning on at a good pace. The headteacher recognises that although staff keep good records of the pupils' progress they do not always make sufficient use of assessment to guide the pupils onto the next steps in learning. Staff are always on hand to support the learners and make good use of praise and rewards to encourage positive attitudes. One boy said, 'If I get stuck the teacher always helps me.'

The new headteacher has won the confidence of staff and parents and has made a real impact by building on the school's previous success. Almost all parents report that communication and involvement have improved and that they feel welcome and involved in school. Leaders and managers share common goals and ensure that pupils' well-being is at the heart of decision-making. They also support staff very well through monitoring and training to maintain the school's high academic standards. Parents much appreciate the school's positive ethos and many attribute its academic success to the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. The pupils love learning and both boys and girls give of their best, resulting in outstanding achievement. They work and play happily together and quickly make friends with those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Those with little or no English when they start school receive much support and soon learn to join in with their peers and make rapid gains in communicating effectively. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are friendly and kind. One girl said, 'I've got lots of friends and am never lonely because there is always someone to play with.' The pupils enjoy finding out new things and are very good at using books for research. They have contributed much to the school's success in achieving the Healthy Schools award and Activemark and have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.

Leaders and managers have a very good understanding of the challenges facing the school and their strategic plan provides a useful tool to secure further improvement. In a short time, the headteacher has increased the involvement of staff and governors in decision-making and begun to use challenging targets. Governors are willing supporters and have a good grasp of the school's work. There is a strong sense of teamwork and high levels of commitment to the interests of the pupils. As one parent wrote, 'An excellent, cohesive and well managed school. My child has made tremendous improvement since he joined. The school pays particular attention to individual progress and needs. Definitely, every child matters at this school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children settle very quickly into the warm and welcoming Foundation Stage. They make brisk progress and by the end of the Reception year are working at levels that are in advance of those expected for their age in all of the areas of learning. Several factors contribute to this success including very good teaching, an exciting and practical curriculum and a strong emphasis on helping the children to become effective and independent learners. Children's learning is effective because of the successful balance between play, working independently and skilful adult support. Children's personal, social and emotional development is exceptionally good. They are very good at working together and maintain high levels of concentration. The staff know their needs and provide a safe and secure environment in which the children thrive. Staff are good at finding ways to engage all groups and have been particularly successful in encouraging boys to be more adventurous in their writing. Staff regularly observe the children and record their key successes but do not always use this information to plan the next activities. Nonetheless, the children are happy, confident and very well prepared for the next stage of their education because they have a secure grasp of early reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve exceptionally well because, as one parent wrote, 'The school gives the children space and resources to be children and to be active in their learning.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen up some aspects of assessment, particularly in using the information to pinpoint the next steps in learning.

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Annex A

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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

23 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parsonage Farm Nursery and Infant School, Farnborough, GU14 9TT

Thank you for being so helpful and making me feel welcome when I came to visit your school. You seem to be very happy and everyone said how much he or she liked coming to school. It was good to see that you play together so well and that you work hard. I was impressed by how well you behave and could see that you all try to be kind to each other. You help to make the school a happy place to learn.

There are many special things about your outstanding school.

- The adults make sure that you are well cared for and safe.
- You do really well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You are good listeners and concentrate hard.
- Your teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and give you lots of opportunities to learn outside.
- The Nursery and Reception children are very good at learning sounds to help them to read.
- The headteacher and other adults work together very well to improve the school.

I have asked your teachers to help to make the school even better by keeping a better check on how well you are doing. You can help by always listening to their advice.

I hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Sean O'Toole

Lead Inspector