

# Forres Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117284
<b>Local Authority</b>	HERTFORDSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	312556
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Keith Sadler

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	314
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kalim Ramcharan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Val Bick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stanstead Road Hoddesdon Hertfordshire EN11 0RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01992467821
<b>Fax number</b>	01992467821

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Forres is bigger than most primary schools. Almost all the pupils are of White British backgrounds and none are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is average. Similarly, the proportion of pupils receiving additional support is similar to that found nationally. Most of these pupils have either speech, language and communication or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Although the full range of ability is represented in the school's intake, children's language and social skills are below those expected. The school has gained the following awards: Investors in People, Healthy Schools, Sports Activemark, and the national information and communication technology (ICT) mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Forres is a satisfactory school. It provides a happy and secure environment that promotes good personal development and well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Many comment on the good levels of care and the strong nurturing atmosphere that helps pupils to feel safe and encourages good behaviour. Almost all parents said that their children enjoy school and learning. The care and support provided are good and the provision by the staff and the school's partnership with other agencies is particularly effective for vulnerable pupils.

Children in the Foundation Stage progress well because the provision is of good quality and has undergone many positive changes since the arrival of the new leader. Although many children enter school with weaker than usual language and social skills, a large majority reach the expected goals by the time that they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make steady progress, and in both year groups it is quickening. Standards, as shown by the end of Year 2 assessments, were average in 2007. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is satisfactory in the two younger year groups and is much stronger in the upper years. This is the result of some unsettled staffing. In the past, standards in writing have been lower than those in reading but because there has been a good focus on improving writing, this gap is closing. In Years 5 and 6, many pupils now make good progress and achieve well. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to attain standards that are above the national average. However, the number of pupils that the school targets to attain the higher level in writing is too small.

The new system for tracking pupils' progress that was introduced in Years 5 and 6 in September 2007 is paying dividends and has been a key factor in the improvement in progress. Staff can now pinpoint any individual underperformance and put targeted support in place. The school is keenly aware that these good checking arrangements need to be embedded throughout the school. Teaching is satisfactory and improving, due in part, to the very positive impact of the deputy headteacher who, because she is now non-class based, is able to influence the quality of teaching and learning positively. This has led to an increasing number of good and outstanding lessons in which pupils learn well. However, there is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching. When lessons are less than good, it is often because the teacher has not made the focus of the lesson clear to pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has led a good range of improvements that have made a positive impact on pupils' achievement since September 2007. The senior leadership team has been strengthened by new appointments and arrangements. This has led to improvements in the quality of provision and the coordination of the different key stages, and renewed rigour in self-evaluation. The staff work together closely as a team and are determined that the improvements made will continue and overall effectiveness strengthened. These improvements demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's achievement is good. They make good progress, particularly in their literacy skills and personal and social development. The good routines help the children to feel secure. Children's ongoing progress is assessed effectively and these assessments are used well to plan a good range of activities, both indoors and outdoors. Adult-led activities are effective and

staff question children well to extend their learning. There have been particular improvements in outdoor learning. This space is used well. Exploratory play activities that engage children effectively in all areas of learning are well organised. Even though many children enter the school with language and social skills that are below average, because of the good provision most meet the national expectations for pupils entering Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop more consistency in the quality of teaching and learning particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Raise standards in writing at the end of Year 6 and increase the number of pupils reaching the higher level.
- Embed the good guidance arrangements evident in Years 5 and 6 throughout the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The introduction of a focused programme of teaching letters and sounds has made a positive impact on pupils' achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1, and is raising the standard of writing. In the past, achievement in mathematics has been behind that in reading in national assessments at the end of Year 2. However, because of the fresh impetus gained from more focused teaching and learning, current Year 2 pupils are on course to close the gap. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach higher standards than the average results attained in the past three years. This is because pupils now have a much clearer view of what is expected of them and have been given good guidance on how to attain their targets. Although the proportion on course to gain the higher level is much bigger than in 2007, it remains too small in writing. Slower learners are supported well both in class and in small groups led by support staff. As a result they make steady progress. When this support is very good, some pupils make rapid progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils arrive at school with a spring in their step. They enjoy their lessons and outings. As one pupil commented, 'We like lots of subjects!' Attendance is in line with national averages. Behaviour is good and pupils have positive attitudes. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Pupils get on well together and are respectful to their teachers. In their games they enjoy helping pupils who are not as able as them. Pupils lead healthy and safe lives. They are very involved in sport and enjoy showing their many trophies. Pupils respond well to the good range of opportunities for them to take responsibility. They are proud of their membership of the school council for example, and also of being selected to 'buddy' Reception children during lunchtimes. In addition, they thoroughly enjoy raising money for charities by organising events, such as cake sales. Pupils' good personal skills and average literacy and numeracy skills enables them to be appropriately prepared for secondary education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Many lessons are now of good quality due to the good emphasis that has been placed on strengthening pupils' learning. However, this is not consistently the case and in some classes, lessons are satisfactory at best. In the best lessons, teachers make clear what the objectives of lessons are that helps pupils to understand what their targets are. Critically, in these lessons, pupils know what they have to do to meet them. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6. Some lessons in these year groups are outstanding because teachers fashion the lesson objectives cleverly and promote exceptionally good learning by ensuring that activities are very well matched to pupils' needs. However, in other year groups there are some inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Not all lessons are characterised by a brisk pace to learning and highly positive relationships. Because staff are now clear about what is expected of them in all lessons and they are being effectively coached by the deputy headteacher to be more consistent, the quality of teaching and learning is improving.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and it is now good. Its main strength lies in its good organisation which enables smooth progress to be achieved in pupils' learning. Teachers plan lessons to link subjects together effectively and this helps to make learning more real and interesting and to mirror life experiences. For example, the pupils' project on 'Bugsy Malone and America' captured the pupils' imagination and linked geography, writing and history in a most interesting way. Teachers are quick to tailor activities for pupils who need extra help, through special group teaching. Interesting activities and outings enliven learning and help pupils to know more about how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils talk particularly positively about their residential trips. Extra subjects, such as French and swimming, extend the curriculum beyond the normal.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for the pupils are satisfactory overall with some strengths. Guidance and support for pupils' academic development are satisfactory but the quality of care and guidance given for pupils' personal development is good. The individual pupils are well known by the teachers, and pupils appreciate the support that the teachers give. There is regular contact with parents in areas of praise and of concern. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils receive high priority and are effective. The tracking of pupil progress has improved but the sharing of targets with the pupils, although good in Years 5 and 6, is not yet consistent. The monitoring of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those that are gifted and talented, ensures that these groups of pupils make similar progress to others.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The headteacher has steered the school through the many improvements that have been developed within the last year and these are impacting positively on pupils' achievement and quickening progress. These have included encouraging middle managers to strengthen their role in checking pupils' progress and the school's provision. The headteacher works in close partnership with the effective deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. This group is becoming increasingly influential. They are a dynamic and forward-looking team who are determined to ensure that the increasingly effective provision is translated into raised standards. The school has developed systems that enable it to have an effective view of its provision and pupils' progress. Governors are playing their part too. They are also committed to further improvement and even though they have recently gone through a transition phase with new members being appointed, they keep a watchful eye on the school's progress.

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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?	3
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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### 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	3
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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forres Primary School, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0RW

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited you recently. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you learn and play. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy school and learning. Your parents also told us that you like school.

Your school is satisfactory and getting better. You told us that you feel safe in school and we can see that this is because the staff take good care of you. The adults work hard for you and the teaching is satisfactory with some lessons being good. We were very impressed with the way that many of you, particularly in Years 5 and 6, know your targets so well. Your behaviour is good and you have good relationships with each other and the adults.

However, your school can improve. Even though there are many good lessons, there are not enough of these. As a result, we have asked that more lessons are as good as the best. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that standards in writing improve and that more of you reach the higher level. We have seen that those of you in Years 5 and 6 know about your targets, and how to improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure that this also happens in the other year groups.

You can help by making sure that you work hard to meet your targets.

Best wishes for the future.

Keith Sadler

Lead inspector