

Farington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119150
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313199
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Nigel Crome-Hawke

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Graeme Rutter
Headteacher	Miss Joanne Ramsbottom
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Rose Street Farington Leyland Lancashire PR25 4GH
Telephone number	01772 421977
Fax number	01772 433293

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with a declining roll. It is situated in an area of slight social disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above the national average. There are a few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at various stages of the year is average, but due to the often small year group sizes this has an impact upon results. Overall, there are slightly more girls than boys. The present headteacher has been in post for two years. The school holds the national Activemark and Healthy Schools awards, and also has Eco status (environmental award).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Farington School provides a satisfactory quality of education. There are some good features in the personal development of pupils and the care provided for them. Since the last inspection, the school has gone through an unsettling period, with temporary leadership and declining numbers. The appointment of the current headteacher in 2005 had a significant and positive impact. Variable standards and behaviour issues have been stabilised for the better, although the school recognises that it still has some way to go in improving standards in all subject areas.

The school is a friendly and welcoming place with clearly established routines. Pupils are polite and helpful and behaviour is good. Parents are highly supportive of recent changes. One comment, typical of many, states that it is a school 'where all staff are very welcoming and the teachers and children seem very happy'.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently at, or slightly above, national averages for the last four years. The variable year group numbers have created a fluctuating pattern at Key Stage 2, but overall standards in English and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average. Although, this represents satisfactory achievement, some higher attaining pupils do not make the progress expected of them and standards in science are below average in Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this and is conscious that its recent focus upon behaviour, literacy and numeracy has meant that this area has remained largely untargeted. It is clearly identified as a priority for and plans for improvement are in the early stages of development.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The parental survey was unanimous in its support for this aspect of the school. The school council is a strength of the school's work. Meeting frequently and representing all ages, it has contributed significantly to the life of the school. Playground facilities have been researched, planned and purchased, using a devolved sum from the school budget, and the uniform has been revised following parental and pupil surveying. Pupils are aware of how to keep healthy and they say they feel safe and valued.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Issues relating to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) have been tackled effectively since the last inspection. The use of ICT now forms a significant part of daily school life, much to the pupils' interest and enjoyment. The school is clearly moving in the right direction in developing more robust self-evaluation procedures. The tracking systems introduced are supporting this, as is the revised assessment practice. These have yet to be used fully by teachers to provide a suitable level of challenge for all pupils in lessons. The curriculum is broad and balanced; new approaches to planning learning across different subjects are beginning to bring about improvements. The impact of an effective curriculum for personal, social and health education and the good levels of care, guidance and support are demonstrated by the positive attitudes of the pupils and their good relationships with each other and the staff. Teaching assistants are especially effective in their support, both in and out of the classroom.

Leadership and management across the whole school are satisfactory, with strong direction from the headteacher. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. The governing body is questioning yet supportive. Recent improvements in pupils' personal development and attendance, and the development of effective systems of assessment are evidence of the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is staffed by a new team, put in place a year ago. It is led and managed satisfactorily. From a slightly lower than typical starting point, children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. This is because the rich curriculum meets their needs and interests and they benefit from working with highly committed adults. The Reception area, including its outdoor area, is a stimulating learning environment. Staff work well together and have recently made improvements to systems of assessments. The information arising from assessments is not yet used fully to inform planning and teaching. Children are well cared for and their personal development is satisfactory. Physical development is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the progress of higher attaining pupils.
- Make better use of assessment to provide challenge and sustain learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children start in Reception with skills that are slightly below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make satisfactory progress but do not quite reach the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception class. The school places significant emphasis on children's physical development and, combined with high quality resources, this leads to good progress in this area with many reaching the expected level.

Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils achieve well, except for the higher attaining pupils who do not make consistently good progress.

Results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 vary year by year because of the ability and size of the groups. However, over time it is clear that standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics. Standards in Key Stage 2 science have dropped over the last two years and are below average. Very small group sizes in 2006–7 means that caution needs to be applied when interpreting the significance of statistical data, but the school's monitoring of individual progress shows that pupils make satisfactory progress. The higher attaining pupils are not, however, making enough progress in all subjects.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because they have clear targets and sensitive support that aids their learning. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and is a strength of the school because of the wide range of opportunities the school provides for pupils to develop their social, moral and physical skills and understanding. Awareness of healthy lifestyles is good. Pupils say they enjoy their learning, especially since the improvements in behaviour over the last two years. Attendance has improved, is now above the national average, and is especially good in Key Stage 1. Occasional incidents of low level bullying are dealt with promptly and well by the school. Pupils say they feel safe and valued as members of the school.

Pupils clearly enjoy taking on responsibility and feel they have a genuine voice in decision-making. The active school council has used the school's budget to plan and upgrade the outdoor play facilities and they run the tuck shop. The eco committee is popular and as a result, pupils show a mature understanding of citizenship and ecology issues and are able to explain these confidently. They also support the local community through charity work and Christmas choirs in local churches. Parents are universal in their support of the way the school's ethos promotes the personal development of the pupils.

Cultural development is satisfactory and the school knows that it needs to promote spiritual development more consistently. Pupils' are satisfactorily prepared for their future learning. They learn to use ICT well, and they develop basic skills of literacy and numeracy adequately.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are several good aspects. Teachers successfully create stimulating and interesting learning environments for the pupils. Colourful displays, imaginative visual prompts and the use of visits and visitors add interest to lessons. Interactive whiteboards are available in all classrooms but are not always used to full effect. Planning is satisfactory; lessons run smoothly and are well structured and resourced. Lessons often include a variety of activities that interest the pupils and they say they enjoy their learning. However, activities are not always sufficiently challenging, particularly for more able pupils. Teachers manage pupils sensitively based on their good relationships with them. Consequently, pupils behave well and apply themselves to their work. Books are marked regularly and some teachers add useful comments to aid further improvement, although this is not always the case. The new assessment procedures are now providing teachers with more information about the progress their pupils make. As yet this information is not being used effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged in lessons, particularly the most able. Support staff are used effectively and this especially benefits those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those whose first language is not English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall. The changing numbers on roll mean the school has constantly to adjust the curriculum to ensure pupils do not repeat or miss aspects of the National Curriculum. This is done well and all statutory requirements are met. Changes are planned to make the curriculum more responsive to the school's and pupils' individual needs. An example

of this already having a positive impact is the recently developed approach used in Key Stages 1 and 2 where learning is linked across different subjects and is stimulated by one topic. The school also adjusts the curriculum to provide for the needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but those of the more able pupils are not fully met. The school recognises that it needs to develop further opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills of writing and literacy in subjects across the curriculum. The well developed programme for personal, social and health education has made a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. A range of extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good levels of care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school. Robust procedures for child protection, health and safety and risk assessments provide a safe learning environment. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Parents are very appreciative of the support for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff are carefully trained to meet their specific needs and their caring relationships support their personal development. The emphasis upon emotional and physical well-being is a strength of the provision. The 'Farrington After School Team' provides good quality before and after school activities and is well organised, stimulating and well attended. Together with the independent on-site playgroup they are increasingly effective in supporting the community and pupils' well-being. The delivery of the social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme over the last two years has had a very positive effect upon pupils' behaviour and attitudes. It has helped pupils to build an increased vocabulary with which they can express their feelings more clearly.

Recently improved systems to track pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy help the school to spot and respond when pupils are underachieving. As yet these procedures are not in place in other subjects. Work with parents and outside agencies is a strength of the school and help support pupils' learning and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since taking up post two years ago the headteacher has significantly reshaped and refocused the school, bringing to it a calmness, sense of direction and a sharp focus on standards and achievement. Her effective leadership and relentless efforts on behalf of the school have stabilised behaviour and unified the staff. Parents and the governing body are highly supportive of her, and the impact is seen in improved attendance, reduced exclusions and the good personal development of the pupils. New appointments have stabilised staffing and made responsibilities of key staff clearer. Much has been done most recently to ensure clear systems are in place to set targets, track pupils' progress and monitor and evaluate the school's overall performance. The focus so far has been on literacy and numeracy. However, this has led to standards in Key Stage 2 science falling behind and plans for improvement are in the early stages of development. The improvements in monitoring the performance in English and mathematics are providing an accurate picture of standards in the school and this is beginning to be used effectively.

Financial management is good. The school has used the accommodation released by falling rolls well to create additional learning areas for the pupils. Good partnership with other agencies and schools has resulted in resources being brought to the school that benefit pupils' personal

development. The governing body knows the school well and challenges it to improve further. Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.

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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	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	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?	2

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 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

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

22 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farington Primary School, Lancashire, PR25 4GH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told me a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it. I spent a lot of time finding out how you learn in your lessons, looking at your work and talking to your teachers. Your school has gone through some unsettling times but it is a satisfactory school, with some good features.

These are the best things about your school:

- you have a headteacher who knows how to make the school even better for you
- the improvements in behaviour are good and you can all focus upon your learning. This is very important
- you say you feel safe, valued and enjoy your learning
- the teachers and other adults all care for you and look after you well
- your school council is a strength of the school.

To make your school an even better place it is going to:

- work with you to raise standards in science
- develop teaching so that the most able pupils can achieve higher levels in their work and tests
- use assessment more to provide challenging and interesting lessons for you.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best and if you have any difficulties. You can also help by continuing to attend school, behaving well and working hard as you already do.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector