

Farley Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109829
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	325039
Inspection date	12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	202
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Morrison
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Marshall
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Farley Hill Reading RG7 1UB
Telephone number	01189 732148
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the impact of leaders and managers on the quality of teaching throughout the school, and particularly in Key Stage 2
- how consistent teaching is throughout the school and its impact on achievement and standards
- confirmation of strengths in personal development and well-being, the curriculum and in care support and guidance.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons; sampling of pupils' work; discussion with pupils, staff and governors; the school's documentation and assessment information; and the inspection questionnaires returned from parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average size school admits pupils from Farley Hill and the surrounding areas. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very small. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, most of whom find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, is far less than in most schools. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, there is a relentless drive to ensure that standards are maintained. Pupils' needs are met by the provision of an enriched curriculum that provides many diverse learning opportunities. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one commented, 'How lucky we are to have a school that is such a happy and exciting place for our children to attend.' This is typical of many of the comments received.

Children's starting points vary, but are generally above expectations for their age. Writing, reading and calculation skills are less well developed than is typical of four-year-olds, but their attitudes are considerably better than is usually found. Children make good progress because staff quickly assess their needs and ensure that a range of appropriate activities are provided. Those that start at the beginning of the summer term have less time to respond to the good provision, but good transition arrangements into Year 1 help ensure that good progress is maintained. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average. Good progress continues, and at the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) are above average. This is because pupils have many opportunities to read and apply their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum, and ICT is used effectively by both teachers and pupils to enhance and enrich learning. The school is aware that the number of pupils who attained the higher levels in science in the 2008 national tests was too low, and has taken urgent action to ensure that pupils have plenty of challenging opportunities to apply the skills they are taught. Pupils are on track to improve science results this year. Those currently in Year 6 are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging, and who receive additional support with their work, also progress well. This is because their needs are identified, and their work planned accordingly. Also, the school receives excellent support from outside agencies, who offer support and advice that is acted upon. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Teaching is good overall. Records indicate that most is good and some is outstanding. 'Our teachers help us become independent and we never get bored,' is typical of the comments pupils make. In the majority of classes, progress is at least good. This is because teachers accurately assess the needs of the pupils, plan appropriate activities, and give them plenty of opportunities to work together and apply the skills that they are taught. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Pupils are actively engaged in activities that they find interesting and that they are keen to share with visitors. While both teachers and teaching assistants support pupils well in their learning overall, the rigour with which pupils are questioned about ongoing work, especially during 'independent working' sessions varies, and expectations are sometimes not high enough. Consequently, opportunities to consolidate understanding, develop skills, accelerate progress and further challenge pupils are occasionally lost.

Pupils really enjoy school and talk with great enthusiasm about the many opportunities the outstanding curriculum offers them. Learning to play an instrument and read music; the well-established and successful teaching of French; numerous visits both locally, further afield and abroad; use of the school environment; visitors and numerous clubs: all of these contribute to the opportunities for pupils to take part, learn and excel. Time is set aside every day for pupils to apply the skills they are taught, and these opportunities to prioritise, plan and work together contribute significantly to their outstanding personal development and well-being.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and secure, and know that they can turn to any adult within the school if they need support or guidance. The way in which they collaborate is exemplary, both in class and on the playground. They are very familiar with what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They are also aware of the local and wider communities, actively supporting, through fund-raising, an orphanage in Kenya. They respond to the strong caring ethos with very positive attitudes, and their behaviour is excellent.

The care, support and guidance given to pupils are outstanding. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are secure, comprehensive and widely understood. The ethos of the school encourages cooperation and understanding, and the way in which all staff celebrate pupils' work through bright and colourful displays helps create an atmosphere conducive to learning. Attendance is above average. Assessment procedures are rigorous and well established. They are used very well by all staff to ensure that pupils' needs are identified and shared with teaching assistants and parents. Pupils are aware of their targets, and the effective marking and feedback, often through one-to-one interviews, ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management are good. Although the senior management team (SMT) was formed recently, the very strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that senior managers are quickly adapting to their new responsibilities. Not all members of the SMT have a thorough understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility, and this applies especially to teaching and learning. The school promotes and evaluates well its contribution to community cohesion. Pupils' understanding of both the local and wider communities is good and is well promoted in many ways, including the development of links within the local community and with other schools, both in this country and abroad. The well-led governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It holds the school to account for the standards achieved, and plays a full and active part in determining priorities. Given its track record, the school has a good capacity to further improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills, attitudes and knowledge generally above those usually found. They make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and calculation, because of the stimulating activities and very good adult support. Children settle into routines quickly because staff are extremely caring and welcoming. A comment made by a parent who said 'My child has settled in very well and looks forward to coming here each day', was typical of many. Excellent relationships between staff and children help facilitate learning because children feel secure and know that all adults will support them. There is a very good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. The activities set are fun and lead to excellent enjoyment for children. For example, children participated in a range of activities based on the story, 'Elmer the Elephant'. They identified and explored exotic fruits with the teacher, and because of focused questioning children made good progress in their vocabulary development as they came up with words to describe the fruits, such as 'sticky', 'squishy' and 'squashy'. Another group of children went outdoors into the 'jungle' to find animals, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Others made trees, painted animal masks, and made animal figures using play-dough. Adults make careful notes about the children's learning and then use this information to plan what they should learn next. Children are cared for very well. For instance, they have been taught about how to use a pair of scissors correctly, and how to pass them safely on to other children. The manager has a good understanding, and is committed to further improving the outcomes for children. Current areas for development include continuing to improve links with

parents so that they have a good understanding about the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as improving children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- To accelerate progress and raise standards higher, ensure that all teachers and teaching assistants have very high expectations, and the skills to consistently ask questions that will challenge and encourage pupils to further improve their work.
- Ensure that all members of the senior management team have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility, and the time to observe and influence the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	1
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

24 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farley Hill Primary School, Reading, RG7 1UB

On behalf of your inspectors, thank you for being so welcoming, polite and friendly when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you, and looking at all your work and the exciting things that you do.

You go to a good school. Here is a list of some of the things we liked best.

- Everybody made us feel very welcome and looked after us well.
- You are very polite and caring, and your behaviour is excellent.
- You listen very carefully to all that your teachers and teaching assistants say.
- You work together very well and make good progress in your work.
- Your teachers are excellent at planning very interesting things for you to do.
- All the adults make sure that you are really well looked after, and you are very appreciative of all that they do.
- Your headteacher leads your school really well.

Every school, even one as good as yours, has something that could be improved.

- We have asked both your teachers and teaching assistants to ask you questions that will really make you think hard, and encourage you to produce work of an even higher standard.
- Some of the people that help run your school are fairly new to their roles, and we have asked your headteacher to help them as much as possible so that they can support her even more in ensuring that your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector