

# Furze Platt Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109842
<b>Local Authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	325041
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gill Close HMI

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	310
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Jenny Wilkes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Jaques
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Oaken Grove Maidenhead SL6 6HQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 410099
<b>Fax number</b>	01628 410570

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Furze Platt Junior School is larger than average. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with the second largest group being of Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is around the national average. Most pupils who enter the school come from the adjacent infant school and few pupils leave or join at other times. There is a significantly lower than average proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities has increased and is broadly average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs. These mainly relate to specific learning difficulties. The school has achieved recognition of its work through the Healthy School Award, Activemark and Investors in People.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Furze Platt Junior is a good school that successfully provides an all-round education. It enables pupils to make good progress and reach standards that are well above average. At the same time, its good quality of care ensures that pupils develop the respect for others and collaboration that underpin their good personal development and prepare them well for the future. Parents think very highly of the school and all who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children enjoyed school and felt safe. Typical comments were, 'we feel privileged to have such a good school on our doorstep', 'the whole school has a very happy feel to it' and that it is 'a truly positive experience in pupils' lives'. Pupils get on well with each other and with staff, and their behaviour is excellent. They are keen to take part in the many activities available and to take responsibility.

Pupils' good achievement results from the school's good provision of teaching and support as well as pupils' very conscientious efforts in class and with homework. Some teaching is outstanding; it excites and engages all pupils with activities that make them think hard. Much teaching is good but some is satisfactory because teachers do not use assessment well enough in planning or during the lesson to ensure that all pupils are challenged, so work is too easy or too hard for some. Assessment of writing is good and tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to assess their own attainment in some topics. Nevertheless, systems of assessment and target setting vary across subjects and classes, and emphasise attainment more than progress.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection in the way that it teaches writing, which has led to rising standards and increasing progress. It has also developed a more linked and creative curriculum that provides pupils with a rich range of practical activities in the classroom and outside. It has correctly identified that the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) through other subjects is not always challenging pupils who already have good ICT skills and is not consistently ensuring the breadth of the subject for all pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The school has improved the way it monitors its effectiveness and plans actions. It makes accurate evaluations of its overall performance. During the inspection, it judged lesson quality accurately but some previous judgements were generous. They were not followed by precise identification and support for areas for development to help raise teaching quality so that pupils' progress in lessons was consistently good. The improvements the school has made since the last inspection and the quality of evaluation show that it has good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring of teaching and identification of areas for development, linking them to professional development to ensure that teaching improves to provide consistent challenge for all pupils.
- Increase the transparency of assessment and target setting so pupils can take a fuller part in assessing their own progress in lessons and against national criteria, facilitating the tracking of progress as well as the attainment of groups.
- Enhance the provision and monitoring of ICT to ensure that all pupils are challenged across the full breadth of the ICT curriculum.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils join the school with attainment that is above average and make good progress to reach standards that are well above average. Overall, standards have risen since the last inspection. In English, they have risen significantly to well above average. Through a strong focus on writing, especially for boys, the school has successfully addressed weaknesses identified at the last inspection and raised standards. In science, standards rose significantly in 2008 to exceptionally high and pupils' progress was outstanding. The school has set itself challenging targets and come close to meeting them. The good support for pupils who have specific learning difficulties provides them with the access to the curriculum that enables them to make similar progress to their peers.

The school has identified correctly that some pupils did not make as much progress as others due to falling behind in earlier years. This included some pupils with high attainment at Key Stage 1 and others who were in the lowest mathematics sets. It has set in place a system for tracking attainment in English and mathematics each term that is focusing teachers more effectively on potential underachievement and leading to improved progress. It emphasises attainment against national expectations but has begun to increase the focus on progress to enable that of the higher-attaining pupils to be better monitored. The school's data indicate that current pupils are on track to reach standards that are above average and that there is good progress but there remains some inconsistency across year groups.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of the school and enjoy being there. They get on well with each other and with staff, and say they have many friends. Their attendance is above average. They behave exceptionally well around the school and in lessons, showing consideration for each other even if problems arise. Pupils develop into self-confident learners who willingly take on responsibility, such as being peer mediators or monitors. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils exemplify the school's values of growth, happiness and respect that they helped to develop, and know about many different cultures. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and take regular exercise. Many of them walk to school or participate in sporting activity such as tag rugby and combined girls' and boys' football teams. They feel safe and say that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils care well for their environment, for example through the eco team. Each member of Year 6 has a responsibility and the school council provides all pupils with experience of democratic processes, but there is room for pupils to participate more in the broader community outside school. Pupils' good basic skills, conscientious approach to learning and ability to work together in groups to solve problems prepare them well for the future, although there is some inconsistency in development of their ICT skills.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The combination of teaching, homework, support, intervention and pupils' very good efforts enable them to learn well and make good progress. Lessons are typified by teachers' good

knowledge of their pupils and the strong professional relationships between them that enables pupils to feel confident to contribute their ideas. Pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn and find out for themselves. They participate enthusiastically in class discussions. Teachers use their subject knowledge well and make good links between areas of learning. They give clear explanations so that pupils know what they need to do. Through their flexibility, teachers harness well the range of home experience that pupils bring to school. They effectively build it into the lessons to enrich them and adeptly find good ways for pupils to share with the whole class the things they know. Teachers carefully plan a range of activities that use all of the lesson time effectively. They work well with teaching assistants who provide well-informed support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers and teaching assistants manage behaviour well, use praise effectively and raise pupils' confidence successfully. Particularly able pupils have some well-designed activities that challenge them and their progress is monitored regularly. As one pupil explained, 'All staff are very kind and helpful, they help us get better at our work'.

The quality of teaching varies across subjects and teaching groups. Some teaching is outstanding and much is good. The best teaching is exciting, uses a variety of styles, including effective group work where pupils interact purposefully, and enables pupils to develop their independence well through making choices. It meets needs very well so that all are fully engaged. Pupils say that they really enjoy these lessons. However, not all pupils can rely on consistently good or better lessons. In some lessons, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan activities that meet the needs of all of the pupils, so they are too hard or too easy. For example, the school has identified correctly that pupils in the lowest sets in mathematics are not always challenged enough. In these lessons, teachers do not monitor everyone's understanding well enough then adapt the work effectively during the lesson and sometimes pupils listen for too long.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The creative curriculum with its cross-curricular focus provides pupils with a rich learning experience. Parents praise the breadth that it offers. Pupils enjoy school because the curriculum is relevant to their needs and provides good opportunities for them to learn through experience, including many practical and outdoor activities. A particular strength is the emphasis placed on enriching the curriculum, for example through the impact of the school sports partnership on physical education and dance. All Year 3 pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Good quality artwork reflects the breadth of the curriculum. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have carefully devised plans and support to enable them to make good progress. Pupils participate eagerly in many extra-curricular activities.

Pupils learn about the wider world in lessons such as music and religious education (RE) and through focus days such as fundraising for the Red Cross. The successful focus weeks, such as on scientific, environmental and frog themes, allow pupils to link and apply their learning. The outdoor learning activities and mini-Olympics help them learn how to work together effectively. Pupils are educated well about safety and health. The provision in literacy and mathematics supports pupils' good progress in these areas and is much improved in writing since the last inspection. The provision for ICT is mainly through other subjects and is not monitored robustly enough to ensure that it is delivered consistently to every pupil or challenges those who have well-developed ICT skills. The school has accurately identified ICT as an area for development

and a recently appointed coordinator is already making improvements. The school has also identified inconsistencies in the teaching of RE and put in place plans for improvement.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parents and pupils praise the good quality of care, guidance and support. It effectively promotes pupils' good personal development and well-being. All pupils are treated as individuals and are known well, with their needs well catered for. Staff give good support for pupils' emotional health as well as their physical health. Safeguarding requirements are met and child protection procedures are in place. Close working with the infant and secondary schools that share the same site smoothes pupils' transitions between them. Teaching assistants accompany pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities on visits to their new school and provide materials that help them to settle in. Pupils from special schools are successfully reintegrated. Pupils who have specific learning difficulties and those at risk of falling behind are supported well through a variety of intervention programmes and their progress is monitored carefully.

Assessment of pupils' work in writing is particularly good in helping them to improve and in showing them how well they are meeting their targets. Assessment and target setting are not as good in other subjects. The provision and monitoring of targets in terms of National Curriculum levels or content is inconsistent, for example those targets given in home-school diaries or pupils' books. Many pupils make self-assessments against criteria at the end of a topic but this is not consistent across subjects and classes. Since the last inspection, the methods for tracking pupils' attainment have improved markedly and contributed to pupils doing better, with two formats currently in use. They have also been used effectively to monitor the attainment of groups of pupils, but less so to evaluate progress. They do not include termly tracking in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leaders are successfully focused on raising standards and have effectively done so in the area of writing, which was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Evaluation and planning have also improved since the last inspection. They involve staff and governors effectively, and build in the views of parents and pupils. Subject leaders draw together a range of evidence to identify areas for development and discuss them with link governors. Overall, self-evaluation is accurate and identifies key areas for improvement for which detailed plans have been drawn up. Joint observation of lessons with inspectors was accurate but there are indications that some earlier observations may have been generous because they did not focus sufficiently on every pupil's progress. Observations do not always lead to the identification of clear areas for development that teachers can work on and which feed into support and professional development to lead continuously to improvement so that all teaching is at least good. There is room for more consistency and rigour in ensuring pupils' entitlement to the full breadth of challenging curricular opportunities. Inclusion is a key aspect of the school's ethos. The school effectively promotes respect for others and is developing further its work on community cohesion, which is satisfactory.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They welcome the breadth of the curriculum and the strong care it provides. Through collection of parents' views, the school has

identified the need for improved communication and has put plans in place to enhance it. There is room for increased efficiency in communication of targets and progress to help parents support their children's learning even better.

Governors know the school well, are involved in evaluation and planning, and are all linked directly with staff. This helps them to obtain information directly and is increasing their expertise in holding the school to account.



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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	3
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**

07 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Furze Platt Junior School, Maidenhead, SL6 6HQ

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school and telling us about it.

We found that it is a good school with a happy atmosphere. You really enjoy coming to school and get on very well with staff and each other. You told us that you find everyone helpful and friendly. Staff look after you very well. You told us that you feel safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you work hard in lessons. You are keen to help out, for example as peer mediators, monitors or in the eco team. You learn well how to work together and respect others.

You make good progress and do well. You particularly enjoy the many practical activities you do in the classroom and outside. You said to us that some of your lessons were great fun and made you think hard. Sometimes the work in lessons is too easy or too hard so we have asked the school to check lessons carefully so the work can always be right for you. You can help by making sure the work makes you think hard. In writing, your teachers give you lots of helpful comments to help you improve and reach your targets. You also assess for yourself how well you get on in some topics. We have asked the school to use these methods in other subjects too. You can help by checking how well you are meeting your targets and thinking how you could improve.

You use computers and ICT when you are learning other subjects and many of you are good at using them. We have asked the school to make sure that you all have enough opportunity to use computers and that the work is hard enough to help your ICT skills improve. You can help by making sure that your ICT skills are improving.

Your teachers know how good the school is and have been helping it to improve. We wish you every success at school and in helping it to become even better.

Yours faithfully

Gill Close

Her Majesty's Inspector