

Farcet CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110811
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325228
Inspection date	4 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	143
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	Captain Beverley Robilliard
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Branch
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Mary's Street Farcet Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE7 3AR
Telephone number	01733 240337
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the success of the school's work in raising standards in writing and mathematics
- how the assessment and tracking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection
- how the Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved since the last inspection
- the quality of the school's evaluation and the impact it has had on the effectiveness of leaders and governors.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with the chair of governors, staff and pupils, samples of pupils' work, and scrutiny of the school's documentation, including pupil tracking and assessment information. 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 is a smaller than average school serving the village and a wide area to the south of Peterborough. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are educated in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average but growing. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is typically below that expected. High numbers of children enter with learning difficulties in some years, but overall the school has a below average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils have, for example, difficulties with their behavioural, emotional and social development, or with speech and communication.

The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time, a silver ECO award, a Sportsmark award and Health Promoting School accreditation.

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. Through good quality teaching and learning and effective leadership, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Their personal development is good because of the excellent care, guidance and support provided by all staff. A large majority of the parents are happy with the school and appreciate its strengths. One said, 'The school is an open, friendly and approachable place,' and this reflects the findings of the inspection.

From their starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school. Although the year groups are often quite small and standards vary from year to year quite considerably, pupils' progress is consistently good and they achieve well, reaching standards in reading, mathematics and science that are generally above average. Standards in writing are below average and the school has put in place a number of worthwhile initiatives to raise standards. These include encouraging boys to write more, ensuring pupils write for different audiences and that they have more opportunities to read each other's work. Remaining weaknesses are the quality of pupils' vocabulary and their speaking skills, which limit the quality of the language they use in their writing. They are aspects of learning that staff recognise pupils need to be constantly practising in order to improve.

In reading, standards are above average because of good teaching and especially good support for the less able pupils. Mathematics standards fell slightly recently but the school quickly acted to find out why and effectively addressed the weakness. Staff did this by ensuring more work involves solving problems and by giving pupils more opportunities to use their number skills in practical situations. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to reach the targets set for them and to attain higher standards than last year. In Year 6, standards are unlikely to be as high as last year due to the pupils' lower starting points. Even so, their progress has been good across Key Stage 2. This good progress and the above average standards, together with growing opportunities for pupils to work together, are helping prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education and their future lives.

Pupils' achievement is good because the teaching and learning are good and improving. The headteacher has a firm belief in ensuring pupils are fully engaged and involved in their learning. She has worked hard, along with the staff, to ensure lessons are more active and that pupils take a more positive role in their own learning. This work has some way to go but already there are more opportunities for pupils to share ideas and to work collaboratively. They are assessing their own progress more and using the skills learned in one subject in other subjects, themes or topics. The special days, for example, are very popular. The one held recently for Year 4 pupils resulted in some imaginative and interesting writing about the Tudors. This was also the case in a science project about space, which included some challenging problem solving tasks.

Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and they know them and their families well. This strength supports the largely good behaviour evident in lessons and the good attitudes towards learning that most pupils have. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to experience activities beyond the school through a range of visits, including residential trips. There is a good number of clubs and after-school activities. Music is becoming a particular strength throughout the school.

A minority of parents have reservations about the behaviour of a few pupils and about the way the school works with those with more severe behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties. Although there are difficulties at times, the school is providing effectively for these pupils and

supports them well. Because of this, disruption is minimised and these pupils make good progress. In addition, the other pupils are very positive about supporting their friends and working alongside those with specific additional needs, and this has a positive impact on their own personal development, and their social and moral understanding.

Overall, pupils' personal development is good. This is due to the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support provided by the school. Whether it is pupils who find learning difficult, have disabilities, are looked after by the local authority or those who have been recently bereaved, excellent arrangements are in place to support all pupils and to help them make good progress. Safeguarding requirements are met and child protection arrangements are robust. In addition, the improved pupil progress tracking systems enable very accurate target setting, with which pupils are becoming more and more involved. The feedback in pupils' books gives them clear guidance about how to improve their work further. This outstanding care and support results in pupils who enjoy school, who say they feel safe, and behaviour that is good. They are taught well how to look after themselves when, for example, using the internet. Pupils say there is no bullying and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy. They make a good contribution to the local and wider community. Their knowledge of the children's home they support in the Philippines, and the lifestyles of the people who live there are well developed. Through this and other work, the school is promoting community cohesion well. Attendance has fallen since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, in spite of the school's efforts to improve it. This is due to a minority of parents taking children out of school for holidays or for other reasons.

The school is successful because it is well led and managed. A good team is firmly in place. The staff and governors have a good awareness of how to improve the school and raise standards further because self-evaluation is accurate. Challenging targets are set for pupils' achievement. However, leaders at all levels have not embedded robust systems to evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils. This includes subject leaders who are not fully involved in monitoring the provision in their subjects. Governors have a good awareness of many of the school's strengths and carry out the great majority of their duties well. They know that they need to gather more first hand evidence of how well the school is doing and how it can improve. Even so, the work of the leadership, the enthusiasm of the headteacher and her team, and the improvements made to the provision since the last inspection all indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Currently, children starting in the Early Years Foundation Stage have broadly typical personal and social skills for their age. Their language and number skills are often below those expected and a high proportion has learning difficulties. Provision has improved since the last inspection. The good teaching and excellent support that children receive helps them make good progress, so that by the time they start in Year 1 they are close to the standards expected in all areas of learning. The welfare of children is outstandingly well developed. Every child, especially those with learning or emotional needs, is exceptionally well supported. As one parent said of her son, 'He feels very secure and settled, and is learning a great deal.'

The teaching is well supported by an experienced and very effective nursery nurse who has a positive impact on children's learning. The classroom provides an exciting learning environment and it is well resourced to support a wide range of appropriate activities. Staff assess children's progress accurately and regularly. They use this information to ensure that any underachievement

is recognised and to ensure children are helped to catch up. However, children have few opportunities to assess and discuss their own progress with an adult. The outdoor classroom is satisfactory but there are limited opportunities for energetic activities such as climbing, balancing and using wheeled toys.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by developing and extending pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills.
- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders and governors so that they have more knowledge of the impact of their work and the school is more aware of the progress made by all groups of pupils.
- Continue the efforts made to promote regular attendance.

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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

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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?	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	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	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?	2
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

5 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Farcet CofE Primary School, Farcet, Peterborough, PE7 3AR

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. In particular, we want to thank those of you we met and talked to at lunchtime. The things you told us were very helpful. We especially enjoyed hearing the choir singing the Abba song! Good luck in the festival. It was good to hear that you are very happy with the school, that behaviour is mostly good and there is no bullying.

We agree with you that it is a good school. We think the way all the adults care for and look after you is outstanding and this has a real impact on your learning and on the way you all get on together. You learn many new things because the teaching is good. By the time you leave the school, you have made good progress and reached above average standards in reading, mathematics and science. We also liked the way you look after each other and some of you help those who find learning more difficult.

To make the school even better, we have asked Mrs Branch and the teachers to help you learn and use lots of new and more grown-up words when you are talking and in your writing. We have asked them to find more ways for teachers and governors to check on how well you are doing. Lastly, we have asked the school to improve attendance. You can help by making sure you are at school as often as possible!

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Farcet and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector