

Fernhurst Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125877
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	328415
Inspection date	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	96
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	23
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Jenkins
Headteacher	Margaret C. Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Haslemere Road Fernhurst Haslemere GU27 3EA
Telephone number	01428 653144
Fax number	01428 653770

Age group	4–10
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Introduction

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

Pupils' standards and achievement across the school

The school's success in improving its identified weaknesses in mathematics and provision for more able pupils

The quality of arrangements for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for them to improve.

Evidence was gathered from visits to lessons, analysis of school and nationally published data, school documents, the views of parents, and discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the 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

Fernhurst Primary School is a smaller than average primary school for pupils from Reception, the last part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), to Year 5. Following a review of educational provision in the locality, the school is designated to take Year 6 pupils from September 2009. A refurbishment programme is in place to provide additional accommodation, and to bring a local private pre-school onto the school site. The school runs a breakfast club, with up to 12 pupils attending regularly. A private provider runs out-of-school care in the school for 32 pupils. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is low, partly because the school does not offer hot meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but the proportion with behavioural and emotional difficulties has increased since the last inspection. Apart from the EYFS, pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fernhurst Primary School is a good school, where pupils flourish both academically and personally. It has a welcoming ethos, recognised by parents who appreciate the commitment of staff. For instance, one parent wrote, 'The school has a caring, family atmosphere. Staff are available if needed and our children are receiving a very good start to their education.' Another wrote, 'The information fed back to parents is superb and the feedback really makes you feel involved in the school and your child's education.' Such comments illustrate the very strong partnership developed with parents and the confidence that the vast majority of parents have in the school.

Pupils' achievement is good and recognised in the award of a Basic Skills Quality Mark, giving pupils a firm basis for their future education and working lives. Pupils progress well through the school from a broadly average start in Year 1 as a result of good teaching. Year groups are small, making comparison with national data unreliable, and standards vary from year to year because of the differing abilities of pupils in each year group. Generally, standards are above national expectations. For example, standards in the Year 2 national assessments have been significantly above the national average in four out of the last five years. The school's data show that pupils, including the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress through the rest of the school. The school identified that pupils did not do as well in mathematics as in English and reviewed its approach to teaching calculation. As a result, standards in mathematics have improved throughout the school, although numeracy skills are still not developed as quickly as reading and writing skills. The introduction of a new phonics programme for younger pupils has had a particularly positive impact on pupils' literacy skills.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and say that adults are really kind and helpful. Pupils enjoy the cross-curricular approach to the curriculum, giving examples of how much they have enjoyed topics such as the Victorians, the Great Fire of London and the natural world. Teachers make very effective links between subjects to make learning relevant and interesting for pupils, and there is much high quality artwork around the school as evidence of the emphasis placed on creative activities. The good curriculum is further enhanced by carefully planned visits or visitors linked to topics and through a variety of enrichment activities, including a residential visit for older pupils. Pupils' experiences are broadened effectively through some specialist teaching, for example in French and music. Activities in lessons are matched well to pupils' individual needs and abilities, and provide appropriate challenge for pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils' communication skills are developed well, seen during the inspection when a class shared their learning on the Victorian workhouse with the rest of the school. Teachers monitor pupils' progress towards their targets regularly and take prompt action if a pupil is not making the expected progress. Marking identifies how pupils' work could be better as well as recognising success and pupils know their targets for improvement. Teachers identify learning objectives in lessons, but these are sometimes too focused on what they will be doing and do not always give pupils clear measures to help them to understand their own learning during the lesson.

The school's good quality care and guidance is a key factor in pupils' good personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is high as a result of the robust approach taken to discouraging holidays during term time. The recent award of an Activemark and Healthy School Status give an indication of pupils' good understanding of

how to lead healthy lifestyles. Clubs give good opportunities for sport alongside a wide range of activities arranged to meet pupils' broader interests. The school council is rightly proud of its work, for example in auditing pupils' interests to inform the extra-curricular programme. Pupils are friendly and well behaved. The emotional and social needs of every child are met well, demonstrating the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and community cohesion. A comment typical of many provided by parents summarises the school's success: 'The school encourages social skills and interdependence and mentorship between school years which enable children to understand that everyone has individual needs and abilities.' The school's continuing good quality education is largely due to effective leadership and management, including governance. Staff work together effectively with a common sense of purpose and teachers plan together well in smaller groups, for example to share expertise and further encourage creative learning through cross-curricular topics. Excellent partnerships have been developed locally. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and the school has very strong partnerships with external agencies to provide support for individual pupils experiencing difficulties. Partnerships with other schools give staff valuable professional development opportunities. Links with schools abroad are helping pupils to understand cultures beyond Britain. The school has a track record of improving performance and the capacity for further improvement, including developing the school's new status, is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Typical comments such as, 'My child has settled in beautifully, loves school very much and only has positive comments about school,' indicate how pleased parents are with the provision. Children are confident around the school and in the playground because they are treated with consideration by older pupils. Links with pre-school provision are strong and all EYFS staff observe children's achievements. Children are known as individuals and the information from assessments is used well to meet their needs. Children have warm, positive relationships with one another and adults, making a significant contribution to their personal development. Staff provide excellent care so that children's welfare is promoted exceptionally well. Children thoroughly enjoy coming to school and skip into the classroom, enthusiastically talking about the things they do in school. The school's data show that children's standards when they join the school vary considerably from year to year, but are generally lower than at the time of the last inspection because more children enter with weaknesses in their communication skills than previously. They achieve well and standards by the end of the year are in line with, and in some areas, such as emotional, creative and physical development, are above, those expected for their age. Adults lead learning very well, giving children opportunities to do things for themselves, for example with their 'think buddies', and children show great pleasure in their own achievement and that of others. Good use is made of the wolf puppet to model social skills and keep children engaged. The good leadership of the EYFS is seen in the wide and interesting range of activities planned for children. Effective use is made of the improved outside area and there are plans in place to build on this further to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them and to develop their early scientific skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' understanding of their achievements by ensuring that they are always clear about what they are expected to learn in their lessons.

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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?	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	1
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?	2

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

23 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Fernhurst Primary School, Fernhurst, GU27 3EA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently to see how well you are learning. It was good to hear that you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. You are lucky to go to a school in such a wonderful setting, with autumn colours around you. I noticed that some of your art work was also full of autumn colour.

Your school gives you a good education and adults are working hard to make it even better. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. You do really interesting things in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well. We saw that you work hard in lessons, and that you enjoy playing together and looking after one another. You know how to stay healthy and how to look after yourselves to stay safe. Adults take good care of you while you are in school.

You told us about your targets for making your work better over the term. We also know that you have prompts in your lessons called 'what I will be learning today' and 'what I will be looking for'. We have asked your teachers to make sure that these tell you exactly what you should learn by the end of the lesson so that you are clearer about the progress you make in each lesson.

Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires. It was helpful to hear what they think about the school. We wish everyone at Fernhurst Primary every success in the future and that you continue to have an enjoyable and successful year ahead.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead inspector