

Far Forest Lea Memorial CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135034
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329007
Inspection date	5 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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)	175
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	Gillian Owen
Headteacher	Max Davis
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	New Road Far Forest Kidderminster DY14 9TQ
Telephone number	01299 266316

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	5 May 2009
Inspection number	329007

Fax number

01299 266784

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	5 May 2009
Inspection number	329007

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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.

- Why pupils perform better in writing in Years 1 and 2 than in reading and mathematics.
- The action the school is taking to raise achievement and standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2, particularly for the more able.
- How well pupils are progressing in science in Years 3 to 6 and to what extent the school has tackled the underachievement in this subject.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. 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

Far Forest Lea Memorial C of E was formally a first school providing education for pupils from four to nine years old. It became a new primary school in September 2007. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. These difficulties lie mainly in the areas of language, speech and communication. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has experienced significant staff turnover in recent years and at the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was on long-term absence. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. In partnership with a private company, before- and after-school care for pupils is provided.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Far Forest Lea Memorial C of E Primary School is satisfactory. There are good features to its work. Across the school, effective pastoral care and support and a positive school atmosphere lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The school's development has been adversely affected by staffing changes but with a more settled teaching force improvements are being made. Most parents hold positive views about the school, especially the care and education provided for their children. They are pleased about the school's atmosphere, the approachability of the staff and the range of additional activities provided. Some comments from the parents' questionnaire included: 'The climate is open and friendly', 'staff and the headteacher are always helpful and approachable' and 'the school offers a good range of activities'. Inspection findings support these views.

Leadership and management are successfully promoting good pastoral care, which is a key component in pupils' good personal development. The headteacher, with his staff has created a positive climate for pupils to learn. The impact of leadership and management on teaching and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school has a sound understanding of its strengths and what is needed to bring about improvements. The school has experienced a number of teacher changes in recent years and this has led to inconsistency in practice. Despite these changes, the school has managed the transition from a first to a primary school well. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has a good partnership with parents. Different cultures and faiths are promoted satisfactorily through the curriculum. The assessment and the tracking of pupils' performance are at a developmental stage and the use of assessment to inform planning is not consistent across the school. Governors are supportive and have a sound overview of the school's performance. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are a strength. There are effective procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and safeguarded. Pupils feel safe at school and are confident that there is always a trusted adult they can turn to if they have problems or are upset. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected by their keen participation in activities. Their attendance is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and relate well to others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well and know how to keep themselves safe. They show a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. Pupils make sound contributions to the school and to the wider community.

Standards by the end of Year 2 in 2008 were average in reading, above average in writing and just below average in mathematics. No pupils attained the higher than expected Level 3 in mathematics. The school's drive and emphasis on improving writing has been effective. Pupils are given good opportunities to write for different purposes and in different styles. The school is taking effective action to raise achievement in mathematics, particularly for the more able. In the national tests for Year 6 in 2008, standards were above average in English, significantly above average in mathematics but average in science. Pupils made good progress from their Year 2 starting points in mathematics. Their progress was satisfactory in English but inadequate in science. Teacher changes, a lack of investigative work in science and the absence of a science leader contributed to these uneven results, particularly in science. The school is taking positive steps to improve pupils' performance in science. While the underachievement has been arrested,

the new science leader is aware of the need to further extend practical investigations. Staff have attended training courses and there are clear plans to extend practical work. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. Across the school, teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Teachers make the purpose of the lesson clear so pupils know what they are to learn. Explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning well. Assessment is not always used well enough to match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, not all pupils are sufficiently challenged and extended. Teaching assistants are well directed and contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly those who need additional help with literacy or numeracy. The setting of pupils' individual learning targets in English and mathematics is inconsistent and so pupils are not always sure what they need to do to improve. Individual target setting is not established in science.

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development and enables them to make satisfactory academic progress. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply and develop writing skills. Leaders have correctly identified the need to increase investigative work in science. Pupils' opportunities to develop skills in art and design, and design and technology are limited. A good range of additional activities, including clubs and visits, enhance pupils' learning and their enjoyment. Popular clubs include basketball, choir, dry slope skiing, football, netball and rugby. The attractive grounds with woodland areas and outdoor equipment support pupils' learning well. The new buildings are well designed and provide good accommodation for the recent addition of older pupils.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to Reception varies but most year groups enter with the knowledge and skills broadly expected for their age. Children settle quickly into routines and enjoy their time at school. They make good progress in their personal and social development because of the good relationships with adults and the good attention to welfare. Children are well behaved, they relate well to others and share equipment and resources. At the time of the inspection, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader was absent due to illness. The leadership and management of this area of the school are satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory with good features. A wide range of interesting topics is provided, which are relevant to children's needs. Good attention is given to children's language development and to the teaching of basic reading skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to acquire and practise early writing skills. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to explore, be creative and work independently but assessments are not always used well enough to plan the next steps in children's learning. Children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and by the end of Reception, standards are broadly average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, particularly in science by increasing the emphasis on investigative and practical work.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and needs.
- Sharpen assessment procedures and use the information effectively to plan teaching and set individual learning targets for pupils.

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.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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 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?	3

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

6 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Far Forest Lea memorial C of E Primary School, Far Forest, DY14 9TQ

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found. Yours is a satisfactory school. It has good features and is showing signs of improvement.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and the activities provided.
- Your school is a friendly and pleasant place to learn in.
- You benefit from an interesting range of additional activities, including clubs and visits.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and you get on well with others.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take good care of you and provide the support you need.

These are three areas the school has been asked to look at to improve the school.

- Some of you could make more progress, particularly in science, by carrying out more practical investigations.
- At times, your teachers could challenge you more in lessons by providing work which is just right for your ability.
- Your teachers could improve the ways of checking your progress and set you clear learning targets in English, mathematics and science.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts

Lead inspector