

Farnborough Road Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104862
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336379
Inspection dates	7–8 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Iain Brodie Browne
Headteacher	Mr Adrian Antell
Date of previous school inspection	0 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors, one of whom conducted the safeguarding inspection. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's assessment records, reports to governors, development plans and curriculum schemes of work. Questionnaires returned by parents, pupils and staff were analysed.

- the progress pupils are making now and what the school's assessments show about possible outcomes in the national tests this year
- the extent to which teaching, assessment and the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils
- whether leadership and management at all levels have the capacity to sustain and build on recent improvements in standards.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average junior school. Pupils are predominantly White British and those from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a very small part of the school population. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average; that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Very few pupils join or leave the school part way through their junior school education. The school has various awards, including Investors in People, the Active Mark, Eco status at bronze and silver, Extended School status and the Healthy Schools award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Attainment is above average and achievement, given pupils' average starting points, is good. This is so for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school's records and inspection evidence show that currently pupils are on course to meet or exceed their challenging targets and maintain the level of attainment gained in recent years.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that there is never any bullying. They understand the importance of staying fit and well, take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. Behaviour is excellent. The inspection took place during extreme bad weather when pupils could not go outside to play and let off steam. Their conduct during the two days of the visit was exemplary, demonstrating the respect and care they have for each other and their ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The school is a calm and harmonious working community where the older pupils undertake responsibilities in a mature manner. Attendance is above average and exclusions are rare. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good.

Learning and progress are good because of good teaching, which is at times outstanding. Pupils say that learning activities in lessons are fun and enjoyable and that teachers diligently check that work is understood before moving on to new tasks. They see this as a key factor in the good progress they are making. Pupils understand how well they are doing but teachers' marking does not always guide pupils on how to get better. There are occasions when the pitch of the work and individual targets lack challenge for all groups of pupils.

Curriculum provision is good. Subjects like art, history, geography and science are woven together with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to give learning relevance and breadth. The good care and support pupils receive builds confidence, helping all to make good progress, including the most vulnerable.

Leadership and management at all levels are good, including that of subject and year leaders. The contribution of middle leaders to raising standards was an issue at the previous inspection. Middle leaders are now highly effective in evaluating the school and setting priorities for school development. This shows the school's good capacity to improve further. The actions taken by leaders have also resulted in improved standards in mathematics and science. Governors know the school well, play an active part in its day-to-day life and ask the right questions to ensure that pupils are getting the best possible deal. The school gives good value for money.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning and so raise standards by:
- - ensuring a greater consistency in the quality of marking, particularly when guiding pupils on how to improve
- - making sure work set and individual targets are challenging enough for all pupils
- - ensuring that learning activities are suitably demanding for all groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. They enjoy school: this is evident from their good attendance and punctuality and the enthusiastic way they speak about their work. Pupils have good literacy, numeracy, speaking, listening and ICT skills. They use these flexibly and well across all areas of the curriculum. They have the ability to work independently and in group activities. This was seen in a Year 6 English lesson where each pupil had to order chronologically and write about three key events in the life of Ernest Shackleton, then check their work with partners before talking to the class about their work and listening to and evaluating the work of others. Pupils take pride in such topic work, presenting their work neatly and using a range of devices to illustrate their writing. Displays around the school demonstrate their ability to use art, ICT, diagrams and charts effectively.

In the 2009 national tests Year 6 pupils did particularly well in English and science, attaining above average results at Levels 4 and 5. Attainment at those levels in mathematics was average and pupils' progress was satisfactory. The school has tackled this difference rigorously and the work seen in lessons and in pupils' books shows a marked rise in their progress in the subject.

Vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do particularly well in this school. Many make excellent progress in their work and personal development, and become confident and enthusiastic learners.

By the end of Year 6 pupils are caring, confident and independent young people and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils from all years contribute to school improvement through the work of the school council, which has suggested and helped plan for better lunch arrangements and play equipment. They show their concern for others through extensive charitable activities. When engaged in such and in music and sport in the local community their excellent behaviour is often commented upon. They are good ambassadors for their school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress as they move from Year 3 to Year 6. In the best lessons teachers make good use of the time available because they plan a wide variety of activities to interest pupils and develop their knowledge, understanding and basic skills at a fast pace. In some lessons the challenge of the work is pitched at one level and does not stretch the most able pupils. Similarly individual targets are not always challenging enough. In all lessons, working relationships between teachers and pupils are uniformly good, based on mutual respect. Teachers and teaching assistants monitor learning closely, giving timely and effective support when difficulties are met. Such guidance is not always apparent in marking which, although done regularly, sometimes lacks precision on what pupils need to do to improve. The good work of the teaching assistants enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable in any way to make the same good progress as others.

The curriculum provides well for pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils find the thematic approach interesting and fun. For example, the use of music from the Tudor period in a Year 5 lesson broadened pupils understanding of the culture of that age. They soon lost any inhibitions and enjoyed the challenge of mastering the unfamiliar dance steps. There are many strong features to the curriculum which provide pupils with a wide range of additional experiences. For example, there are many extra-curricular activities in a variety of sports and in music. All pupils sing and many play musical instruments. The quantity and quality of experimental work in science and the use of pupils' numerical skills across the curriculum have increased since the previous

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inspection. There are, however, too few regular, planned opportunities for the development of pupils' enterprise skills. Plans are in place to address this.

Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' good personal development and well-being. Pupils say that the adults give generously of their time to help them with problems and that they get the support they need. Good induction procedures smooth the transition from the infant school and from Year 6 into the local secondary schools. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive the support and guidance they need through links with outside agencies and a range of effective strategies and interventions. These are often provided by skilled teaching assistants. Safeguarding procedures are good. Arrangements for child protection and for the checking of identities of all adults working with children are firmly in place.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The improvements in provision and standards since the previous inspection have been driven by the good leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior colleagues. There is a sense of unity and common purpose in the school. Self-evaluation is accurate because of consistent and robust monitoring of performance, backed up by wide consultation. When weaknesses become apparent, timely and effective measures are adopted to deal with the problem, hence the rise in standards in mathematics and the excellent progress made by vulnerable pupils. In 2009 targets were met and further challenging targets have been set for this academic year to maintain the momentum of improvement. The school is highly effective in giving every boy and girl an equal chance, evident in the good academic and personal development of all pupils.

Robust safeguarding arrangements ensure the security of all who work in the school. There is a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and social characteristics of the community it serves and its work is having a positive impact on that community's cohesion. The school works closely with parents and carers and a range of agencies to support pupils in their learning and personal development. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities in the community, particularly in sport and music, and there are close links with other schools to aid transition and share resources and expertise. The school is now looking to broaden pupils' understanding of global issues, particularly the way children learn and develop in other countries.

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Governors are not complacent. They support and encourage, monitor the work of the school well and have high expectations for the future. They recognise the factors which have resulted in the improvements already noted and are looking to use these strengths to do even better. This is seen in good forward planning where appropriate priorities are in place to secure further improvements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Responses to the questionnaire very largely present a positive picture of the school. A large majority of parents and carers are happy with the education that their children receive. Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed. Those few parents and carers who raised concerns did so in relation to specific incidents and circumstances concerning their own children.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farnborough Road Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 163 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 492 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	98	60	60	37	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	122	75	39	24	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	72	44	88	54	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	78	48	82	50	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	90	55	72	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	38	97	60	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	45	84	52	4	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	77	47	80	49	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	47	81	50	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	42	82	50	10	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	55	34	95	58	4	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	99	61	61	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	107	66	53	33	2	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farnborough Road Junior School, Southport PR8 3DF

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you and saw how hard you are working and how well you behave in class and around school.

The standard of your work is better than normally seen for pupils of your age and the progress you make is good. You have good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, and you speak confidently and listen carefully and respectfully to your teachers and to each other. You find the curriculum's topic approach interesting and we feel that it broadens your education and helps you make links between subjects. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips away and visitors to school are helping you become confident and enthusiastic learners.

You are achieving well because you always do your best and because the teaching you receive is at least good and often excellent. You told us that learning activities are mostly fun and that your teachers are helpful and encouraging. We agree. You also receive the care and support you need and the arrangements the school makes for your well-being and safety are working well.

We have asked the school to do three things to make the quality of your education even better. These are to make clear in the marking of your books what you have to do to improve, to use improvement targets in all years and to make sure that learning activities are always challenging and make you think hard.

Please tell your parents that we did read through the questionnaires they returned on the last day of the inspection. They were most helpful. Thank you to those of you who gave so generously of your time to talk to us. You made a valuable contribution to the inspection and your comments helped us to understand your school.

Our best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Dower

Lead inspector

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