

Farnham Royal Church of England Combined School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110435
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	337499
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Harrison
Headteacher	V Williams
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who saw 20 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at teachers' planning, the school's assessment information and safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 86 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching and how well it meets differing needs
- how much pupils enjoy school and feel safe and how well they know how to improve their work
- the effectiveness of leaders at identifying the right priorities and tackling the fall in pupils' attainment
- the quality of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Pupils come from a very diverse local community. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Pupils come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, and about half are from minority ethnic families where English is not the home language.

Since January 2010 the deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher. She is being supported by an advisory headteacher from the local authority.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Leaders have rightly identified that attainment is too low and that pupils do not achieve well enough. Despite a willingness from members of staff to develop the school, the capacity to improve is inadequate. Recent extensive support from the local authority has not yet had sufficient impact upon how quickly pupils learn, and attainment has fallen significantly since the January 2007 inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but then progress in the rest of the school is too slow, with attainment being exceptionally low by the end of Year 6 in national tests in 2009.

While there is some good teaching in the school, some is inadequate and too much is barely satisfactory. Until recently, teachers had been given too little guidance about how to improve, although there were some positive indicators of improvements in lessons seen during the inspection. The impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is not yet strong enough to accelerate progress. Teachers are hardworking, extremely enthusiastic and are determined to improve. They make learning fun, but work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils. Teaching takes too little account of the needs of pupils in the early stages of learning English. Current arrangements for support outside lessons for these pupils are not effective at moving learning on quickly enough.

There are strengths in pupils' personal development. Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and work hard in most lessons. Close links with the nearby church support spiritual development well. Pupils happily write prayers and take part in acts of worship. Pupils respect each other's beliefs and they get on well together. Most pupils enjoy school, with one commenting that 'there are always fun things to do'.

However, attendance is below average; leaders know that they need to do more to ensure that all parents and carers fully understand the importance of good attendance.

The acting headteacher has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and has worked tirelessly to improve systems for evaluating school effectiveness so that a more accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses can be formed. This is helping her to identify the right priorities. Some green shoots of improvement are already appearing; for example, teaching has begun to improve in many classes but most of these developments are very recent. The drive for improvement is not yet firmly embedded across the school and monitoring by leaders at all levels is not rigorous

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enough to ensure that recent initiatives are being applied consistently and are having the desired effect. The school has a wealth of data but is uncertain about the reliability of some of this; this makes it difficult for leaders to measure accurately recent progress or to check in detail how well different groups are doing so that they can ensure all pupils are improving quickly enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise pupils' attainment the school should:
- Improve leadership and management and build the school's capacity to improve by:
 - ensuring that developments are monitored closely by leaders at all levels to check that they are applied consistently and are effective at raising attainment
 - sharpening the use of data to check the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- Build on existing good practice in some classes and improve the overall quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers make better use of assessment information to ensure that work is always pitched at the right level for all pupils.
- Improve provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language by:
 - ensuring that teachers receive training to help them understand how to meet pupils' needs more successfully
 - reviewing the current arrangements for supporting these pupils so that they are more effective at moving learning on.
- Improve attendance by working with parents and carers to help them understand the importance of sending their children to school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Although pupils enjoy school, pupils' achievement is inadequate and too many do not attend regularly enough. Test results at the end of Year 6 were exceptionally low in 2009. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to do slightly better, but pupils' progress is not improving quickly enough and basic skills are still too weak in some year groups. Consequently, pupils are not prepared adequately for the next stage of their education or for later life.

There is good learning in some lessons; in a good Year 1 numeracy lesson, for example, pupils learnt well because they were fully engaged in an activity that involved measuring capacity using different containers. In a good literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils quickly acquired new skills. They were encouraged to think for themselves and focused support helped them to improve their use of adjectives as they wrote a description of a 'Magic Rock'. Too often in lessons, progress is not fast enough. This is because work is not pitched at the right level to meet the needs of different groups within the class, for example when learning about different genres in literacy lessons or investigating springs in science lessons.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same

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inconsistent progress as others in lessons. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are given limited support outside lessons but this does not always meet their needs well enough.

The school's ethos supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils are proud of their school and show good concern for the needs of others by taking part in charity fundraising. They know clearly the difference between right and wrong and are keen to learn. Peer mediators and the school council are good indicators of how sensibly pupils take responsibility. Pupils get on well together and there is no racial disharmony. Most pupils feel safe and they generally adopt healthy lifestyles in their diets and in their willingness to join in with sports activities such as 'Energize' sessions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Although strategies have failed to improve attendance, pupils are otherwise well cared for. Adults work hard to make school a safe place to be in and pupils know who to turn to if they have a worry. This has a positive effect on school life. Support for potentially

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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vulnerable groups is inadequate. Until recently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were not always identified quickly enough; this is no longer the case. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do not receive appropriate support in or out of lessons.

Teaching has some good features. Teachers get on well with their pupils and effectively use resources such as interactive whiteboards to introduce subjects. Some teachers assess learning carefully and use this information well to plan the next stages in learning. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school and this shortcoming accounts for the slow pace of learning in some lessons. Pupils are set by ability across the school for literacy and numeracy lessons but this is not always effective at moving learning on quickly. The teaching of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English lacks focus and does not take enough account of their needs. Teachers are conscientious about marking work and setting targets. As a consequence, pupils are developing a clearer understanding of how to improve their performance.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well by clubs and visits. Strong partnerships with outside providers, such as cricket and tennis clubs have a good effect on pupils' physical development. There is a strong and successful focus on spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness that supports pupils' personal development well. However, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils' basic skills are built on systematically enough from one year to the next.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	4

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders ensure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis but, until very recently they have not taken action to tackle pupils' falling attainment. Although a start has now been made on improving things, most initiatives are too recent to show sustained impact. As a consequence, the drive and ambitions of the acting headteacher are not yet firmly embedded across the whole school. Governors are supportive but have been over-reliant on information supplied by the school rather than finding out for themselves how well it is performing.

Although the school tackles discrimination vigorously, it does not promote equality effectively. Leaders are beginning to make sharper use of data to check more closely the progress of different groups but this is in the very early stages of development. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. There is a strong sense of

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school community and pupils have a secure understanding of their place in the wider world. Leaders are strengthening this aspect of the school's work further by establishing a link with a school in France to give pupils more experience of life beyond the United Kingdom.

The school has satisfactory safeguarding procedures and, at the time of the inspection, complied with statutory requirements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they join the school in the Nursery, nearly all the children are working at levels below those typically expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress from these comparatively low starting points, although attainment remains below average by the end of the Reception Year. Children do especially well in personal, social and emotional development; adults are kind and caring and they give children many opportunities to select where they are going to work, helping them to develop good independence. Children are happy in lessons, behave sensibly and cooperate well. When children work together as a group in the Nursery and Reception classes, for example when learning letter sounds, they sometimes make good progress and they are well supported by teachers. However, there is insufficient support or focus on helping children who have little spoken English to improve their skills. Children's learning is sometimes slower when they are working independently. This is because some activities, such as colouring in worksheets, lack challenge.

Leaders have improved the outdoor area since the January 2007 inspection and this is

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being used well to support learning. They are rightly focusing on improving the quality of assessment and record-keeping and the use of data so that children's progress and any variations between groups can be checked more carefully.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers indicated that they are pleased with the work of the school. They feel that their children are well looked after and enjoy school. Positive comments included 'the ethos of the school is good' and 'children are made to feel special'. A small number of parents and carers raised concerns about how well they are consulted. The school acknowledges that this is an area of its work that has not been strong enough in the past and has started to tackle this through their own questionnaire. Some parents and carers were also worried about how well the school manages unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that that the school has clear systems for tackling this and staff follow procedures carefully.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Combined 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 346 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	30	35	3	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	65	27	31	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	51	34	40	8	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	52	32	37	8	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	50	40	47	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	44	40	47	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	49	38	44	5	6	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)	37	43	36	42	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	48	32	37	9	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	45	37	43	6	7	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	34	42	49	11	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	41	44	51	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	56	30	35	6	7	1	1

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.



17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Farnham Royal CE Combined School, Slough SL2 3AW

Thank you being so welcoming and for completing the questionnaire. We found some good things in your school but there are some things that need to improve. We have put it in a special category so that it is given extra help to improve.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes work together well and make steady progress.
- You behave well and like taking responsibility. The school council gives you a good voice in the life of the school.
- You all get on well together and play together happily at playtimes.
- Adults in the school are caring and they look after you well, although they have not managed to improve attendance.
- The acting headteacher knows what needs to be done and is working hard to ensure that everyone is pulling together to improve the school.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

We have asked your school to make sure that:

- teachers always plan work that is not too hard or too easy
- pupils who are still learning to speak English as an additional language are given the right sort of help
- leaders expect enough of you and check all the new things that are being tried out to see if they are helping you to do better.

You can help the school by making sure that you attend regularly.

Another inspector will visit your school every few months to check how things are going. I look forward to reading the reports and hearing how you are all getting on.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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