

# Farmor's School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115728
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338649
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Shield

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1097
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Bridges
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Stokes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2010
<b>School address</b>	The Park Fairford GL7 4JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01285 712302
<b>Fax number</b>	01285 713504
<b>Email address</b>	a.stokes@farmors.gloucs.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	338649

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 36 lessons or parts of lessons, and 36 teachers were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, members of staff and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including the self-evaluation form, safeguarding and other policy documents, the school development plan and records of students' progress. In reaching their judgements, they took into account the views of 215 parents and carers, in addition to those of students and staff, expressed in questionnaires.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the extent of any variation in progress across different subjects and the extent to which any gap is narrowing
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum challenge and meet the needs of all students, including the less able boys
- the contribution of the school's specialisms to school improvement
- whether the sixth form is the 'jewel in the crown'.

## Information about the school

Farmor's School is a larger than average school which serves Fairford, Lechlade and a wide area beyond, including as far afield as Swindon. The school is a specialist business and enterprise college, and has more recently taken on an additional specialism in science. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the school is just below average and there are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school works with other schools in the South Cotswold Schools Partnership to extend its curriculum provision in Key Stage 4.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Students flourish in this outstanding school. As one Year 7 student said to inspectors: 'I thoroughly enjoy Farmor's. Lovely atmosphere and a great place to learn. I couldn't have gone to a better school!' Students do well because the school's pursuit of academic excellence is matched by its ethos of care and support for individuals. The school educates some confident and articulate young people, who speak thoughtfully and very positively about their time at school. The school, judged outstanding in its last inspection report, remains ambitious. It has continued to move forward impressively since then and is exceptionally well placed to continue to improve.

There are many key strengths and some areas for further improvement:

- Students are exceptionally proud to belong and are keen to do their best. Their trust in their teachers shines through and students appreciate the time that teachers give to ensuring they achieve well.
- Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Students' good attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their good progress.
- Students feel exceptionally safe and everyone looks out for each other. The school nurtures students' personal development assiduously and their care and welfare are at the heart of the school's work.
- The well-planned curriculum inspires high levels of motivation among the students.
- Students excel in the sixth form and sixth formers are excellent role models and ambassadors for the school.
- Students make good progress through the school, although it is more rapid in some subjects than others. They make particularly good progress in English and mathematics and this, alongside activities and courses provided through the business and enterprise specialism, ensures that students are singularly well prepared for their futures.
- Teaching is good and often inspirational. However, there are some inconsistencies across the school. Not all teachers use information about how well students are doing to adapt tasks and set work which challenges individual students at the right level.
- The headteacher's astute leadership ensures that the school's purpose is clearly articulated. She is well supported by her senior team and many leaders at all levels.

The school has sustained high standards since the last inspection and has successfully tackled areas of weakness identified in the last report. New performance data systems are enabling the school to track students' progress more sharply and provide a secure basis for accurate self-evaluation. This is the springboard for further development and lends confidence to the view that the school has an outstanding capacity to sustain its

**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

improvements.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lever up the quality of teaching across the school to that of the best by:
  - ensuring that all teachers use data and feedback on how well students are doing to set work tailored more precisely to individual needs
  - promoting a more consistent approach to active learning in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

Students enjoy school hugely. They grow in confidence and develop very positive attitudes to learning. The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of high attainment, especially in English and mathematics. Most students learn well because teachers have high expectations and explain complex ideas clearly. In a particularly effective Year 10 drama lesson, students worked with considerable autonomy and responsibility to develop their dramatic ideas. The teacher communicated his ideas confidently and the students knew exactly how to proceed. The teaching had panache and energy and good pace which inspired all students to make outstanding progress. Active learning of this kind which gives students responsibility for organising their time and ideas is particularly effective. Able and average attaining students do particularly well but, having identified weaknesses amongst less able boys, the school has responded with an adapted curriculum and teaching which focuses on their progress. As a result, the gap is narrowing. Similarly, weaknesses in the performance of students in information and communication technology (ICT) have been tackled rigorously. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the performance of a few subjects remain. The school has worked successfully to improve the progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Detailed plans to support these students, coupled with a thoughtful deployment of learning assistants and timely interventions, ensure that they make similar progress to that of their classmates.

Students' positive attitudes and sheer enjoyment of learning are reflected in their well above average attendance. They contribute well to the school and local communities, for example through undertaking energy audits for local businesses and participating in Young Enterprise activities. They develop an acute awareness of global issues such as sustainability through their participation as climate change ambassadors. Students recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle and many participate enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting and fitness activities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

---

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

**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

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The school has made imaginative changes to its Key Stage 3 curriculum which retains separate subjects while encouraging the development of common skills across different disciplines. At Key Stage 4, flexible option choices are responsive to individual needs. More able students are well provided for, with an option to take additional GCSE courses if they are able. There is an increasing vocational and work-related programme, offered through the South Cotswold Schools Partnership, which is ensuring that the needs of all students are more fully met. The formal curriculum is enriched by an exciting range of visits, visitors and clubs.

While teaching is good and sometimes outstanding overall, it is inconsistent. Parents and carers and students alike made this point to inspectors. At its best, teaching is inspirational, well planned and organised, with tasks which encourage students' curiosity. Teachers confidently use new technology and other resources to spark a lively response. This results in a hard-working learning climate in which pupils are keen to do their best. However, not all teaching is of this high quality. In a few lessons, assessment is not used to plan work which challenges all students and learning is too passive. Nevertheless, the school, through its teaching and learning forum, is working successfully to share good practice. Some assessment practice, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is exemplary.

Meticulous attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Students are known well to staff as individuals. The school works closely with families, students and a range of specialist support agencies to sustain the academic and personal development of students, particularly those vulnerable students facing challenging circumstances. As

**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

a result, behaviour and attendance have improved and vulnerable students progress as well as their peers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Clear sighted leadership and management are at the heart of the school’s success. The headteacher works assiduously to improve students’ outcomes and opportunities. With good support from her senior team, she has set a clear path for improvement based on realistic self-evaluation. High expectations are communicated persuasively to all staff so that there is a shared sense of direction and strong teamwork. Middle leaders willingly take responsibility and are key players in the school’s improvement.

The promotion of equal opportunities is good as the school rigorously monitors and analyses students' outcomes at both individual and group level, and takes action to narrow any emerging gaps. Governors are knowledgeable and dedicated. They provide good support to the headteacher, and are increasingly confident in providing challenge to senior managers. They carry out their responsibilities meticulously, especially with regard to pupils’ welfare and safeguarding. All safeguarding procedures are in place and the school takes especial care to ensure not only that students feel safe, but also that potential risks to their welfare and safety are rigorously avoided. The school does much to promote community cohesion but is at an early stage of evaluating how well it fosters an understanding of others from different faiths, ethnic groups and cultures. In this respect, the school has a made a particular success of its status as both a specialist business and enterprise and science college. It has developed strong partnerships with local schools and uses the additional resources wisely to support innovation across the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress, because teaching encourages intellectual rigour and ensures students think for themselves. Sixth formers are powerful ambassadors for the school, leading by example. They are ambitious for success and confident in applying skills. In taking responsibility for their own learning, students make the most of the tutorial-style teaching and the wide range of curricular opportunities available. Students relish opportunities to debate and interrogate texts, as in an A-level history lesson when students demonstrated a good grasp of the political and cultural context behind the British withdrawal from India in 1945. Consistently good teaching underpins students' success. Rigorous monitoring of students' progress ensures that they are kept on track. Good support helps them to achieve their aims for the future. Sixth formers take their responsibilities seriously as Heads of House, school presidents or as reading buddies and peer counsellors with younger students. The sixth form is exceptionally well led and managed because there is a continual monitoring of the quality of outcomes and of provision, and effective strategic planning for further improvement.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers questionnaire responses were generally very supportive of the school. In all, most are happy with their children's experience at Farmor's. They are confident that they are safe and believe the school offers good opportunities for them to



**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

develop both academically and personally. Many wrote comments in support of their views. While many were in support of the school, others were more negative, quoting aspects of the school's teaching and communication with parents and carers. However, these were balanced by as many positive comments about the same issue. Nevertheless, inspectors agree that, while teaching is good, there are some inconsistencies.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farmor's 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 215 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection.

In total, there are 1049 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	36	127	59	9	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	33	136	63	5	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	62	29	135	63	16	7	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	33	121	56	17	8	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	68	32	135	63	8	4	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	20	123	57	37	17	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	21	143	67	20	9	2	1
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)	68	32	108	50	16	7	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	30	125	58	16	7	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	25	122	57	24	11	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	18	141	66	11	5	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	74	34	124	58	12	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	37	121	56	10	5	2	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Farmor's School, Fairford, Gloucestershire GL7 4JQ

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited. We particularly enjoyed meeting and talking with you. The mature and thoughtful manner in which you answered our questions is a tribute to your excellent personal development. It is obvious you take considerable pride in being a student at Farmor's School and enjoy being at the school. Your school is outstanding in most respects.

Here are some of the main findings from our report:

- The school provides a distinctive and exciting climate in which to learn. This encourages you to do well.
- Teachers take care to ensure that you are well looked after, in terms of both your personal and academic needs.
- Teaching which gets you actively involved and which makes topics interesting and relevant ensures that most of you make good progress. However, as you pointed out to us, not all teaching is of this quality. As a result, we have asked the school to make sure these inconsistencies are ironed out and that every teacher uses information about how well you are doing to set work at your own individual level.
- The sixth form offers exceptional opportunities for you to excel.
- Many of you develop confident personal and social skills, helping to prepare you for your future beyond school.
- The curriculum is excellent and there is a terrific range of clubs and enrichment activities.
- The headteacher, her senior team and all other managers carry out their responsibilities exceptionally well.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes and good luck with your work in the future!

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**