

South Farnborough Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116144
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338736
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Ottley
Headteacher	Helen Fletcher Davies
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons and 10 teachers during the two inspection days, and held meetings with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. They also observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents including records of pupils' progress and other monitoring activities, school policies and guidelines, teachers' plans and questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 127 parents and carers.

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

- the starting points for children and evidence of outstanding outcomes and provision across the Early Years Foundation Stage
- reasons for the decline in standards last year and evidence of accelerated progress this year by pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially in reading and mathematics
- consistency in the quality of teaching in parallel classes in Years 1 and 2
- specific actions taken by leaders in response to the decline in standards and what differences these are making to provision and pupils' progress this year.

Information about the school

The number of pupils on roll is rising in this average sized infant school. There are three parallel classes in each year group. Levels of pupil mobility are higher than usually found, often associated with military family movements. The very large majority of pupils are White British and very few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, but varies significantly between year groups. Most of these pupils have learning or emotional difficulties. The school has a number of awards including Enhanced Healthy School and Activemark.

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

This is an outstanding school. It has maintained its many strengths and improved further in important aspects since the last inspection. There is a tangible commitment from all staff to promote pupils' independent learning and self-esteem and to offer them a curriculum that provides an exceptionally stimulating range of first-hand experiences. Pupils make good progress in their academic learning and attain exceptional levels of personal development. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are exceptionally thoughtful towards one another and enthusiastic about learning and school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is supported extremely effectively by all senior leaders and the governing body. Almost all of the large proportion of parents who replied to the inspectors' questionnaire appreciate these many qualities and the overwhelming majority agree that their children enjoy their time in school. Comments such as, 'My son loves his school', 'We were overjoyed when our child was offered a place', and, 'They both thrive in this stimulating and supportive environment,' were typical of those received.

The attainment of children on entry is significantly below that expected nationally for their age. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a superb start and make rapid progress in their first year in school as a result of consistently outstanding teaching. This is built on well in Years 1 and 2 where pupils make good progress. Here the quality of teaching is good, and sometimes outstanding, but is less consistently so, particularly in Year 2. Attainment in Year 2 has risen significantly from last year and pupils once more are on track to attain above average standards by the end of the year. Pupils flourish throughout their time in school, are very proud of their achievements and keen to share them with one another and any adult they can find. The entire staff team provides excellent care, guidance and support for all pupils and very effectively goes the extra mile to meet the needs of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who might be regarded as being vulnerable.

The headteacher and senior leaders, along with the governors, have robust systems for checking the school's performance, and a very accurate view of its strengths and areas for potential improvement. They move decisively to make improvements where needed, for example in raising the level of attendance, by working closely with parents and carers and outside agencies. The school has worked successfully to maintain its previous strengths and is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Year 2, so that by December 2010

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teaching is good or outstanding, in the very large majority of lessons, in all classes, by:

- ensuring that the progress during the time spent by pupils working independently is carefully checked, and that pupils are purposefully engaged and challenged at these times
- ensuring work and activities are routinely matched to the full range of pupils' abilities
- extending the use of computer technology to support teaching and learning in classrooms.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils achieve well in their time in school and show high levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm with lots of fun, smiles and laughter amidst concentration and serious application. Despite excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is a little below the nationally expected learning goals by the end of the year. It is clear from lessons, pupils' books and the school's assessment information that strong progress is maintained through Years 1 and 2 by girls and boys of all abilities in reading, writing and mathematics. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the extensive team of skilful assistants and the frequent one-to-one support from teachers and assistants. This enables them to make good and, on occasions, excellent progress, albeit often from very low starting points. Progress is fairly consistent between the parallel classes, although there is some variation in Year 2 as seen in lessons and recorded in the school's assessment information. The high levels of pupil mobility and the large cluster of pupils with special educational needs played a significant role in the decline in standards in Year 2 last year. This year, almost half the pupils in Year 2 have already made what might be deemed 'a normal year's progress' in the first half of this school year and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above that expected for their age. The quality of pupils' art and design work is high across the school.

Pupils consistently say they feel totally safe in school, and are confident that adults are always available to help them if they have a problem. One pupil said, 'If someone is hurt the dinner ladies run over to help.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are exceptionally thoughtful about values and beliefs, as for example when talking about what they find it hard to believe in. They also show strong moral and social awareness. They are particularly enthusiastic to contribute to the school and wider community. They help decide the focus for awarding house points each week. Many take on roles such as recycling or developing the magical pathway garden. The green gang led an informative school assembly reminding everyone of how they can help the planet by turning off lights and computers. Pupils are also particularly well informed about the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles, as reflected in the Enhanced Healthy School and Activemark awards. They enthusiastically participate in the physical 'activate' sessions and, in addition to knowing a lot about healthy diet and

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exercise, they talk very earnestly about washing fruit and checking sell-by dates on perishable foods. Pupils arrive punctually and their attendance has improved significantly in the last two years. It is now above the national average and there are no persistent absentees. Pupils’ positive attitudes, their strong sense of team work and collaboration are helping to prepare pupils well for their next stage of education and adult life.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding, but the quality of teaching, although excellent in some lessons, is good overall, as there is some variation, particularly in Year 2. There is very thorough joint planning within year teams to share expertise and ensure common experiences for pupils in the parallel classes. There are many innovative features within the curriculum which enable teachers to motivate and inspire pupils by making activities relevant. Examples of this were seen in an outstanding lesson in Year 1 where, with a real buzz of excitement, pupils were very keen to write following a visit earlier in the week to an open-air museum. In Year 2, pupils were given the opportunity to show their exceptional levels of independence and

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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team work in a wide range of activities, in response to a surprise letter from the headteacher following a visit earlier in the day to the fire station. These activities included collecting data to be presented on a computer, drawing maps of the route, making models of the practice tower and being newspaper reporters. The school is exceptionally skilled at adapting curricular activities in response to pupils’ responses and interests. Another strong feature of teaching and assessment is the way teachers and assistants systematically spend significant amounts of time with small groups and individuals, ensuring they have understood a concept and providing them with detailed feedback and recognition of their achievements. However, at times this comes at a price, with relatively long periods when the majority of pupils are left working independently without any adult input to extend or challenge them, and occasionally on activities that are not sufficiently demanding for the full range of abilities. Pupils use computers frequently in class and out in the corridors, often with the support of teaching assistants who make very careful observations and assessments of their progress and future needs. However, teachers make relatively little use of computer technology to support them in their teaching of large groups or the whole class.

Pupils with special educational needs are identified very quickly and receive high quality additional support enabling them to participate in the full range of experiences, with activities sensitively adapted to meet their needs. This is just one aspect of the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support throughout the school day, and in all years, involving the whole staff team. The way the team greets and welcomes pupils at the start of the day is outstanding. Another major strength is the careful attention to induction on entry and transfer from one year to the next. This is very carefully managed and relates to avoiding sudden lurches in the style of curriculum and teaching and to very careful nurture and pastoral support. All the pupils are exceptionally well known by members of staff and the mixed-age ‘circle times’ help create a united family atmosphere.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is an outstanding leader who maintains a very determined commitment to continually improving the quality of experiences for pupils. Whilst setting very clear expectations and a sense of direction for the school, she also ensures other leaders and staff have every opportunity and means to lead initiatives. All of the senior leaders fulfil

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their roles very well individually and collectively, and there are clear structures for working in teams. There are very effective systems for tracking pupils’ progress, identifying those who need support and how successful any support given has been. The school is tough on itself when making judgements and this helps promote the enthusiasm and commitment to strive for excellence. Swift and robust action is taken to address weaknesses, for example in the way the school has successfully promoted improved attendance and discouraged unauthorised absences. All the staff who replied to the inspectors’ survey say they feel involved in the process of school evaluation and are clear about the school’s aims and direction. Governance is excellent. School governors play an unusually active and significant role in the strategic leadership of the school, providing the right balance of support and challenge. Together with the very successful leadership team they ensure the school is particularly well placed to maintain its established qualities and the capacity to improve further. Governors have a comprehensive set of policies designed to safeguard pupils, related for example to recruitment and child protection, and the school’s leaders implement these robustly with extensive ongoing staff training and careful monitoring of incidents. Partnerships with external agencies are excellent and help the school meet the needs of those pupils who might be regarded as vulnerable. The promotion of equal opportunities is a core principle across the school. Discrimination is not tolerated, team work is a powerful component and all pupils are clearly valued, included and celebrated. There have been no exclusions or reported racist incidents in recent years and pupils show a high level of empathy for differences in cultures, beliefs and backgrounds, in school, locally and more widely. They are very committed to the notion of Fairtrade and sustainability, and talk knowledgeably about these, reflecting their strong appreciation and awareness of responsibilities and the need for community cohesion across the globe. Community cohesion has a high profile in the school’s strategic thinking and planning and the school is clear about further developments to make it outstanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision is exemplary in this highly effective setting where children make exceptional progress within a very vibrant and supportive environment. The leadership and management are excellent, having high aspirations for the children, high expectations of staff and a commitment to continuous improvement. The teachers and assistants work as a very effective team and the three classes operate as one integrated unit, sharing extensive secure accommodation in and out of doors. Routines are clearly well known and understood by the children from the start of the day and encourage independence, for example putting homework in the tray, hanging up book bags or taking the register to the office. The children’s welfare is very carefully managed. There is an excellent balance of child-selected and teacher-directed activities in an enabling environment and children become enthralled, for example pond dipping outside, making animal hats in advance of a planned farm visit, or writing number sentences related to the song about five speckled hens. Excellent modelling of precise language by adults, careful probing questioning and perceptive observations and assessments all enable the learning experiences to build on from children’s responses. This outstanding practice leads to excellent progress from levels on entry significantly below national expectations, especially in language and communication skills, creative development and calculation skills. By the end of the year the large majority have closed the gap considerably and most are close to the learning goals expected nationally for their age.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A relatively high proportion of questionnaires were completed by parents and carers. The vast majority of responses were positive, with the majority strongly supportive about each aspect of work. There was overwhelming agreement and support about children enjoying school, being kept safe, their progress, the quality of teaching, support for healthy lifestyles, the leadership and overall satisfaction. Inspectors wholeheartedly endorse these positive views. Very few parents and carers disagreed with each question,

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and there was no pattern amongst the few negative comments received.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Farnborough Infant 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 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	72	33	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	95	75	30	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	54	52	41	4	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	74	58	49	39	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	72	33	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	61	44	35	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	66	41	32	1	1	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)	60	47	47	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	75	59	45	35	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	70	55	49	39	3	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	51	53	42	4	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	91	79	32	25	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	79	24	19	2	2	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.



31 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of South Farnborough Infant School, Farnborough GU14 6JU

Thank you for helping us and making us very welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. We were pleased to see how much you like your school, but we were not surprised because it is a very special place and an outstanding school. Your parents agree and are very glad that you go to this school.

The children in the Early Years Department get off to a brilliant start and those of you who are in Years 1 and 2 also work very hard and make good progress. We are particularly impressed by the way you take pride in your work, the ways you help around school, care for one another and look after yourselves. Many of you have special jobs, such as members of the green gang and the Fairtrade group and working on the magical pathway garden. You are very lucky to have teachers who think of so many interesting things for you to do, such as visiting the fire station or the open-air museum, and they are very good at making lessons interesting. They are particularly good at working with you either on your own or in a small group to make sure you have understood what it is you are learning. The school has worked very well with your parents and carers and other experts to make sure those few of you who were often absent attend nearly every day.

All the staff work carefully as a team to keep you safe. Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff are very good at helping those of you who find some of your work difficult or have problems from time to time. Your behaviour is excellent in class and around the school. You are very polite and helpful towards one another and visitors.

The headteacher, other leaders and the governors do a great job and have made many improvements around the school. We have asked them to work on one thing to make it even better:

- make sure lessons, particularly in Year 2, provide you with challenging activities with the right balance between working on your own and working with an adult, and that teachers regularly make full use of computers during lessons.

You can help by continuing to work hard and making sure you attend school as often as possible.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly

Lead inspector

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