

Four Marks C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116288
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338783
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cheryl Malam
Headteacher	Lynda Frith
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons or parts of lessons and made short visits to a further 24, observing 11 teachers and three coaching staff teaching sports. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the most recent school self-evaluation form, the school development plan, governors' minutes, the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, the records held on vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, school policies, and reports from the local authority and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from pupils, staff and 129 parents and carers.

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

- strategies to improve attendance to determine the impact
- achievement of gifted and talented pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging
- provision within the curriculum for pupils' cultural development
- provision for language development in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Four Marks C of E Primary is a larger than average size school serving mainly the village of Four Marks, although a small minority of pupils come from the surrounding area. The pupils are predominately White British with very few pupils from other ethnic groups. Very few pupils come from homes where English is not the main language. Far fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals. Many more pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A before- and after-school club is run by an independent provider and is subject to a separate inspection.

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

2

Main findings

Four Marks C of E Primary School provides outstanding quality education for pupils. The excellent leadership and management ensure that highly effective strategies for school improvement are extremely well focused on seeking the highest possible quality of learning. The excellent and highly creative curriculum makes learning very enjoyable and relevant for pupils. Together with the exemplary care, support and guidance that pupils receive, it enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development and grow into mature and confident young people. Pupils behave well and have an excellent knowledge of how to keep safe and stay healthy. They make an outstanding contribution to both the school and local community. Extremely strong partnerships with external agencies provide high quality support for vulnerable pupils and equally strong links with other local schools have supported the improvements in the curriculum.

Achievement is good overall and improving. Nevertheless, there are some variations. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is outstanding and attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above average. This is because of the consistently good and often outstanding teaching that pupils receive in Years 3 to 6. All pupils, including those identified as gifted and talented, are challenged to achieve their very best. However, progress in Years 1 and 2 is no better than satisfactory because pupils in these years are not challenged as consistently. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress as other pupils in Years 3 to 6 but make good progress in Years 1 to 2 because of the excellent support they receive. Children start in Reception with skills that are generally in line with those normally expected at this age and the good provision ensures that they start Year 1 well prepared for future learning. Nevertheless, although achievement overall is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the progress made in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory rather than good because children are not challenged enough in this area and do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop early writing skills.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and is very effective at securing the improvements needed. The driving force behind this school's success and continued improvement is the highly motivated senior leadership team that has inspired all members of staff to raise standards and strive to improve the provision. They all share a strong sense of purpose and work together very effectively. There is substantial evidence to show the very positive impact this is having upon standards and provision across the school. Attainment and progress have risen significantly since the last inspection and the quality of provision has improved in all areas. Attendance rates have increased and are now well above average, and leadership and management have

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improved. This all indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 to match that in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used more consistently to plan lessons that challenge all pupils to achieve of their best
 - increasing the pace of learning so that pupils spend less time as passive learners
 - ensuring that marking makes it very clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve achievement in communication, language and literacy in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills, especially in the outdoor area
 - planning activities that challenge children to achieve their very best in communication, language and literacy.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment is improving across the school and by the end of Year 6 is high. Learning in most lessons observed was at least good, and sometimes outstanding, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Progress is particularly good in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, progress is rather more variable although it is particularly good in reading and consequently attainment in this area is above average by the end of Year 2. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving very well because the work provided challenges them effectively and is stimulating. For example, Year 6 pupils studying Ancient Greece watched a modern film based on a story from that time and then developed their understanding of how to produce a newspaper article on this through acting out a press conference with the characters. In an excellent mathematics lesson on a perimeter and area, more able pupils were challenged to find the perimeter and area of sections of Tutankhamen's tomb which they had been studying in history. In these lessons, pupils were keen to learn because they were stimulated by the topic. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well to enable them to be fully included in lessons and make good progress overall. Vibrant displays around the school show pupils' very good attainment in art and some excellent music making was observed. Good quality work was also observed in history, religious education and geography. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with those expected.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They reported no bullying and they trust the adults to deal with any that might occur. Pupils demonstrate great maturity in the polite and courteous way they speak with visitors. They make an excellent contribution to school

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life by taking on a wide range of responsibilities; for example the eco-group monitors the school's energy consumption. Pupils' very secure understanding of how to stay healthy and keep fit is evident in the enthusiastic way pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for physical activity in the school grounds and after school. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the local community, for example by contributing to the parish council debate on a new playground. The school council meets with other school councils locally to help encourage collaborative working between schools. The skills gained here, coupled with high attainment, means that pupils are very well prepared for their future life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong, feel valued and show respect for themselves and for others. Pupils have a very good understanding of other cultures.

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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils learn well in Years 3 to 6 because of the consistently good and often outstanding teaching. The extremely stimulating curriculum that makes learning so interesting 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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ensures many highly motivating experiences for pupils makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has established very strong international links, including good quality links with schools in Uganda, France and a nearby inner city school. Activities such as these, and the many visits and visitors to the school, make learning extremely enjoyable for all pupils and develop their understanding of other cultures very well.

Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and ensure that the different learning styles of pupils are accommodated. Most teachers are skilled at knowing just what question to ask to challenge pupils and extend their learning. For example, in a music lesson, suitable questioning encouraged pupils to reflect upon their composition and seek ways to improve it. Assessment information is used effectively to plan work that challenges pupils to achieve their full potential. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, is improving but, because it is not so consistently good, is the reason why pupils make relatively less progress in these years. When teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning slows because pupils are too passive and teachers do not use assessment information and feedback to raise the level of challenge.

The care, guidance and support in this school are exemplary. Child protection procedures are detailed and well known to all staff. All adults provide excellent guidance for pupils on how to stay safe and healthy. Extremely detailed records of the progress made by individual pupils are kept and used very well in discussions with parents and carers to set targets for pupils' learning. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented gain additional high quality support through the strong partnerships with other local schools.

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?

School leaders are extremely effective in communicating their vision for the school to all staff. The staff in this school work together as a cohesive team to bring about school improvement and ensure that the best possible education is provided for all pupils. The school is careful to tackle any incidents of discrimination and the great care taken to monitor the progress of all ensures good equality of opportunity. Safeguarding requirements are met well and procedures to keep pupils safe are meticulous. Strong links with and beyond the local community and the attention paid to pupils' multicultural understanding help to promote community cohesion well.

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Governors support the school well and share the drive to improve further. Budget management is outstanding, enabling the school to manage a very challenging financial situation this year. All governors visit the school regularly and monitor its work, although these visits are not always linked closely enough to the priorities of the school development plan. Parents and carers and pupils are consulted regularly but do not always respond to good initiatives such as the opportunities provided to meet with governors during parent/teacher interviews. Where parents and carers do respond, their views are taken into account in the very good quality school development plan.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers rightly value the start that children get to school. Home visits before children start school help children to feel really secure and cared for and ensure they get a good start to their education. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the needs of the children are met well and the provision for their welfare is exemplary. Children feel really secure and cared for. They achieve well and make good progress in almost all areas of learning from starting points that are in line with those typically expected for their age. The exception is children's writing skills, which are more limited because some activities, particularly the outdoor ones, allow too few opportunities to develop writing. Teachers and other adults are skilled at ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. This enables all children to grow in confidence and build securely on their previous experience. The well organised and attractive environment is used effectively to support a stimulating curriculum that provides a good degree of challenge

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to children. Whole-class activities are planned well and provide motivating experiences. Children have particularly enjoyed their work on the Egyptians. Leadership and management are good. The expertise and skill of the adults and the good systems for checking on children's progress ensure that all individuals are gently, but effectively, challenged to achieve well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

In addition to the main questionnaire content 71 parents and carers submitted written comments. The majority of these were positive. Parents and carers clearly have a high regard for this school. Typical of the positive comments were: 'This is my child's fourth primary school and the best by far', and 'Four Marks primary is a wonderful school.' One parent summed this school up very well by saying, 'The school values the whole child, not just the academic achievements. I have been able to watch my child not only achieve academically but grow emotionally, spiritually and socially.'

A small minority of parents and carers made negative comments which mirrored the responses on the questionnaire and were concerned mainly with the management of behaviour or leadership and management.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments of parents and carers. Inspectors judge that behaviour is good and managed well, but note that the school has a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour and, although this is managed well, this may affect perceptions about behaviour as a whole.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Four Marks C of E Primary 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 129 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 249 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	53	53	41	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	55	53	40	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	42	66	51	7	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	46	52	40	10	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	56	44	59	46	7	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	42	65	50	7	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	53	53	51	3	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)	55	43	49	38	9	7	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	40	60	47	10	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	25	65	50	20	16	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	36	57	44	11	9	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	49	38	57	44	9	7	7	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	64	50	50	39	8	6	2	2

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.



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24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Four Marks C of E Primary School, Alton GU34 5AS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the polite and mature way that you spoke to us.

Yours is an outstanding school. We think that it looks after you and gives you a really exciting curriculum. Here are some of the things that we liked:

- Your achievement is outstanding and your attainment is well above average.
- Your school makes learning interesting and fun because of the wonderful range of activities provided for you. No wonder you enjoy school so much!
- The school looks after you very well, which is why you know how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- The teaching is good. You have very talented teachers and teaching assistants who make learning enjoyable and interesting.
- You make a big contribution to the running of the school through the school council and other jobs that you do.
- The school is led and managed extremely well by your excellent headteacher and the people who help her.

To help make your school even better, we have asked the staff and governors to:

- make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 make the same progress as those in Years 3 to 6
- give those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to develop your early writing skills.

Thank you again for your help, and congratulations on a wonderful school.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector

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