

Farthinghoe Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121819
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340017
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2010
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sid Atkins
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Whitehouse
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector spent just under half his time looking at pupils' learning, visiting nine lessons taught by four different staff. He also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. He observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's self-evaluation documents, including records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Inspection questionnaires were received from staff, pupils and from 27 parents and carers.

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

- how well pupils make progress through the school, particularly in science, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and by those who are older and more able.
- how consistent and effective the teaching is and how well staff use assessment to plan work at the right level for pupils.
- the effectiveness of school leaders, including senior leaders and governors, in ensuring improved progress by pupils and the success with which they promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is a very small primary school, serving the village of Farthinghoe and the surrounding rural area. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. All speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than in most schools. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Of these, the majority have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social development needs. Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception year and are in the same class as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The school experiences relatively high levels of pupil mobility. In a typical year group between Year 3 and Year 6, around half the pupils did not start in Reception. The current headteacher joined the school in 2008. In the previous eight years, the school had five different headteachers.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a successful school, greatly valued by its community, which has made significant progress since its last inspection. Attainment is rising steadily as a result of good teaching and committed leadership. The school supports pupils' well-being and personal development very effectively. In this closely-knit community, pupils care a great deal for each other, feel outstandingly safe and thoroughly enjoy school life. They show good attitudes to learning, work diligently and behave well. Though improving steadily as a result of the school's good partnership with parents, attendance remains satisfactory. Pupils have an outstanding knowledge of healthy lifestyles, voluntarily undertaking exercise challenges and games activities at the local secondary school. Their understanding of a balanced diet has prompted the re-introduction of hot meals, sourced locally and further securing the school's excellent engagement with its local community. Pupils' moral and social development are outstanding. Although their knowledge of different global cultures is less strong, community cohesion has strengthened considerably through the development of links with other United Kingdom schools.

Pupils benefit from the high ratio of available adults and achieve well across the school. Children's progress in Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Although the pace of learning is particularly rapid in Years 5 and 6, progress is less consistent in Years 3 and 4 than elsewhere. Pupils with additional learning needs and those who are gifted or talented also progress well and most reach standards higher than similar pupils across the country. This is partly a reflection of the effective additional support provided in class to meet pupils' specific needs. The well-planned curriculum enables pupils to build solid basic skills and good independent learning skills. Extra-curricular provision is a strength.

In most respects, teachers use assessment well to check learning and to plan lessons. Rigorous analysis of assessment data quickly indicates underperformance. Other than in Years 3 and 4, marking and written feedback provide pupils with effective guidance for improvement.

Good leadership and incisive self-evaluation ensure that weaknesses are identified and tackled promptly and that the school runs smoothly. Effective monitoring and improvement of teaching and learning ensure that pupils make good progress in most lessons. Links with partner institutions are well-developed. Effective improvement planning and the positive impact of the changes already made on pupils' academic and personal development indicate that the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the success of current strategies to ensure that pupils attend school as regularly as possible.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' written work in Years 3 and 4 is more rigorous, so that pupils have more guidance as to how they should improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 and has risen steadily over the last three years. Despite relatively high mobility in Years 2 to 6, pupils build well on their previous learning. Those with additional learning needs make particularly good progress as a result of rigorous tracking, specific individual teaching and the nurturing environment. Where pupils have been absent, the school supports them with additional teaching to make up for lost learning. The school constantly evaluates the impact of additional support to ensure that it remains effective.

Pupils make good progress in lessons because activities are well matched to their needs. Lower attaining pupils consolidate their learning with the effective support of teaching assistants while more able pupils are able to work independently and sustain their concentration. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson where two pupils concentrated on a well-presented piece of independent writing for a considerable part of a lesson. Even Reception pupils are encouraged to sustain their attention on chosen activities. Teachers challenge all pupils effectively through asking open-ended questions which invite an extended response and enable the teacher to evaluate pupils' understanding. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, work was precisely matched to individual needs. Pupils across the school respond enthusiastically to the brisk pace of lessons and teachers' challenging questions, demonstrating their confidence in acquiring new knowledge.

The school's positive ethos promotes a strong sense of consideration for others. There have been no recent exclusions. The school council invites pupils' suggestions, meets with governors and provides an effective forum for pupils' views. They raise funds through regular book sales and the pupil road safety officers closely monitor parking around the school on their behalf. Although neither spiritual nor cultural development are quite so strong, pupils are gregarious, articulate, enthusiastic and caring, demonstrating outstanding moral and social skills. They eagerly undertake posts of special responsibility around the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

While there is some outstanding teaching, there is also some variability across the school. As a result, progress is better in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations, clear objectives, collaborative planning and consistent behaviour management. In Years 3 and 4 marking is less precise in identifying the steps pupils must take to improve their work and this is reflected in more erratic progress. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support learners with additional learning needs. Most aspects of assessment, including pupils' evaluation of their own work and teachers' rigorous analysis of performance data, successfully promote good progress. Individual targets for improvement are making a significant impact upon pupils' progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6.

Although the curriculum is strongly focused on embedding key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, it also aims to provide a breadth of experience. A range of imaginative topics, such as 'China and The Silk Route', skilfully integrate key skills from several subject areas. The school has prioritised the development of research and investigative skills and this is evident in some challenging science investigations in Years 5 and 6. Small group and individual interventions are precisely and effectively targeted on pupils' specific needs. Gifted pupils are supported well through effective planning. Good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (an area in which the school is giving a lead to other small schools locally), the wide range of visits and visitors, good residential opportunities and the excellent extra-curricular provision all have a strong impact on pupils' good personal development.

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Staff have a very close knowledge of pupils' needs and support individuals and families outstandingly well. The school works very effectively with outside agencies to support the health, social or behavioural needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Funded provision for one-to-one support for pupils and their parents, where learning or social needs exist, is highly effective in supporting pupils' progress. The school has prioritised improved attendance although overall figures remain satisfactory. Most parents support the school's efforts and ensure that their children attend frequently, although a few remain less responsive.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team works tirelessly to embed high expectations in all that the school does and staff share a determination to make the school even better. There has been resolute action to ensure that teaching and learning are effective, based on challenging targets for improvement. A rigorous tracking system enables staff to evaluate pupils' progress and they are held accountable for the progress made. Teachers now have subject responsibilities and this has increased their involvement in whole-school issues around curriculum and their understanding of their roles in improving pupils' progress. Effective systems ensure that the school runs smoothly.

The governing body is very supportive. Governors understand the school's strengths well and have a good involvement in shaping its future direction. They actively monitor progress in relation to the school's development plan. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met, including the rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils. Roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are clearly defined. A high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being, given the tight confines of the premises and site. Potential discrimination is tackled resolutely.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well by rigorous evaluation of the performance of all pupils. The recent focus on community cohesion issues, in partnership with the local cluster of small schools, has significantly increased awareness of this agenda. The school is highly cohesive in itself and at the heart of village life. Opportunities to learn about other faiths and about historic and contemporary experiences of immigration, supported by links with other schools and drawing upon the resources of arts and literature, are now established. Further global links are under development.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are slightly above the levels expected for their age, particularly in their well-developed social skills and their good knowledge and understanding of the world. Excellent induction arrangements and the homely environment ensure that children feel extremely safe and settle quickly, are very well cared for and build excellent relationships with staff. They behave very well and play together confidently. Throughout their time in Reception they benefit significantly from the very high level of engagement with adults and with the older pupils in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the younger children are highly motivated and make outstanding progress, in particular in their exceptionally well-developed speaking and listening and general language skills. Despite limitations in the provision in terms of the space available, children's attainment is well above the expected level in almost all areas by the end of Reception.

Teaching is very challenging and builds extremely well on children's enthusiasm. This was evident, for example, in an impressive activity where children were icing small cakes which they had made. With skilled adult support, this became a vibrant learning experience which encompassed a wide range of learning, in mathematics, speaking skills, fine motor control, creative development and knowledge of the world, and supported rapid learning and progress. The teaching of sounds and letters is systematic and thorough and this has had an excellent impact upon children's developing skills in reading and writing. Children have good opportunities to choose activities independently, both indoors and in the outside area. While the dedicated outdoor space

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is restricted, it is generally well-resourced, though not all activities are available at any one time. The rigorous monitoring, recording and analysis of children's progress strongly underpins their rapid learning.

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	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and almost all are very happy with the school. One parent said, 'An excellent school, with an approach that is highly personal and professional. We are lucky to have it in our village.' Typically, parents and carers greatly appreciate the sense of community and the high quality teaching. A few parents raised individual concerns around, for example, the level of academic challenge in Years 5 and 6, the changing of reading books and the school's support for pupils with special educational needs. Although there was no pattern to these comments, the inspector considered all points carefully. Observations indicate that attainment is continuing to rise and that pupils with specific learning needs are well provided for. Available evidence strongly suggests that this is a very caring school where pupils are well supported and make good progress. Inspection findings strongly endorse parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farthinghoe 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 inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 41 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	81	4	15	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	74	7	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	48	14	52	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	52	11	41	1	4	1	4
The teaching is good at this school	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	56	9	33	3	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	81	5	19	0	0	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)	14	52	8	30	1	4	4	15
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	67	7	26	1	4	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	48	12	44	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	59	9	33	1	4	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	74	5	19	1	4	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	78	5	19	1	4	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



26 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farthinghoe Primary School, Brackley NN13 5PA

Thank you for making me so welcome when we visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you around the school and in lessons. From what you said to me, you will not be surprised to hear that Farthinghoe is a good school. It has improved rapidly in recent terms.

The main findings are these:

You behave well, are polite, enthusiastic and friendly and you work hard.

Your attainment is above average in Year 6 and is rising from year to year.

Teachers make your lessons fun and support you very well in your learning.

You make outstanding progress in Reception and good progress in the rest of the school.

All the adults make sure that you are cared for outstandingly well.

You feel exceptionally safe in this very close community and have an outstanding understanding of the importance of eating healthily.

The curriculum is good. You enjoy a wide range of visits and take part in many extra activities which help you to become confident and independent.

Those of you who find learning difficult get really effective extra help, so that many of you make good progress.

School leaders work very hard to make the school even better.

I am asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better:

Encourage all of you to avoid missing any days at school.

Ensure that when your written work is marked in Years 3 and 4 you are given clear guidance about how you can make your work better.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan

Lead inspector

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