

Farncombe Church of England Infant and Nursesey School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125145
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340728
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2010
Reporting inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Davies
Headteacher	Andrea Simonson
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by five different staff. They held meetings with the chair of the governing body, staff and pupils. They 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 and from 105 parents and carers.

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

- how consistently pupils, especially boys and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make progress in Years 1 and 2 and whether this is helping to raise levels of attainment
- how consistent and effective the teaching is and how well staff use assessment to plan work for pupils at the right level
- how accurately school leaders, including governors, evaluate the work of the school and whether governors meet their statutory obligations in relation to community cohesion.

Information about the school

This is an infant school of average size. It serves a stable residential area. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery class. Most majority pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below average. Virtually all of these have speech and language difficulties. The number of pupils who have statements of special educational needs 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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Farncombe Infant School provides a satisfactory standard of education. In many respects, it serves its community well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the nurturing and supportive ethos and appreciate the school's commitment to the well-being and personal development of its pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and feel very safe. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are aware of what constitutes a proper diet. Pupils have good social skills, show very positive attitudes to learning and behave well. Pupils' engagement with the school's local community through eco activities, support for local organisations and events and through the well-established links with the church is outstanding. The school is very much at the heart of the local community.

Good teaching in Nursery and Reception enables children to reach levels above those expected for their age. Thereafter, progress has, typically, been less consistent, although satisfactory overall. However, the pace of learning has picked up significantly in the last year, so that standards in mathematics have begun to rise and those in reading are currently high. In general, boys and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make the least rapid progress, although there has been some improvement this year. The satisfactory curriculum enables pupils to build increasingly sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Extra-curricular provision is extensive, contributing strongly to pupils' good personal development.

While assessment is good in Nursery and Reception, it has been less effective in Years 1 and 2. Teachers use some aspects of assessment satisfactorily to check pupils' learning. However, the marking of pupils' written work does not always give clear guidance as to what they need to do next. The analysis of data has, however, improved and this has contributed to more rapid progress in reading.

The senior leadership team continues to build upon the good provision in Nursery and Reception so that provision and progress in Years 1 and 2 have begun to improve. Pupils' engagement with the school's local community through eco activities and church links is outstanding. The engagement with partner institutions, within the local cluster and with specialist secondary schools, is good. However, while governors are supportive, they have not been sufficiently rigorous in holding school leaders to account and this has contributed to the relatively slow pace of change in the past. In addition, governors have not met their statutory obligations in relation to community cohesion, and no audit or action plan has yet been carried out. Despite some inadequacies in governance, the school has satisfactory capacity for improvement because self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Pupils' progress has improved and attainment is now rising quite rapidly at the end of Year 2 and senior leaders now know what the

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priorities are.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that standards in mathematics and writing by the end of Year 2, particularly for boys and for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are more consistent with the current high standards in reading through:
 - more rigorous monitoring of the progress made by all pupils
 - more effective use of challenging group and individual targets
 - more effective support in class for pupils who have additional learning needs, including those who find learning relatively easy
 - more effective marking of pupils' written work
 - greater accountability of staff for the progress pupils make
- Ensure that the governing body is more effective in analysing pupils' performance, more rigorous in holding school leaders to account and more proactive in setting a direction for the work of the school.
- Ensure that the governing body meets its statutory obligations in relation to community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Despite the good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' attainment has not, in most years, been quite as high, relative to the expected level, by the end of Year 2. Typically, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been broadly average. This is partly because reading and writing were often relatively weaker elements at the end of Reception, especially for boys. As a result, pupils had more ground to cover in Years 1 and 2. Equally, however, the school has not been consistently rigorous in monitoring pupils' progress, so that the pace of learning, particularly in Year 2, and for pupils with special educational needs, has been inconsistent. The school has taken resolute action in the last year to redress this loss of momentum in learning. As a result, standards have risen significantly in reading and mathematics. Though still only satisfactory in writing, progress has been rapid in reading and has improved significantly in mathematics. Currently, pupils who have additional learning needs make satisfactory progress overall, although the tracking of their progress is still not rigorous enough.

In most lessons, learning is satisfactory, although planning does not always take sufficient account of the range of needs in the class and is not always sufficiently focused on what pupils need to do next. For example, a Year 2 mathematics lesson had a rather slow pace and the teaching assistant was not effectively deployed to move on the learning of pupils. This was true both for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who are more able. Opportunities for pupils to work independently are not always consistently developed. There are some examples of good practice, however. In a successful Year 1 literacy lesson, tasks were closely matched to the needs of a small group of boys who still found writing difficult. Effective support

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gave them the confidence to successfully complete the tasks set.

The school’s calm, positive ethos and well-developed sense of community promote a strong sense of belonging. Pupils really enjoy school and their good behaviour is reflected in the very low level of exclusions. The school council plays a very active part in school life and provides a very good forum for pupils’ views. Pupils participate in the democratic process with great enthusiasm. Older pupils demonstrate very good social skills and are very eager to accept responsibilities around the school.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The high expectations and rigorous assessment evident in Nursery and Reception have not, typically, been such strong features in Years 1 and 2. However, rising standards this year indicate that expectations have risen. This is evident, for example, in the energetic approach to the whole-school ‘Sounds and Letters’ sessions which have contributed significantly to the improved standards in reading. Very good relationships and effective management of pupils’ behaviour sustain an increasingly positive learning environment. The recent focus on speaking and listening skills is supported well when

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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teachers ask carefully structured questions that invite an extended response. This was a feature of a Year 2 geography lesson where pupils carefully evaluated Barnaby Bear’s choice of wardrobe for his next journey. The deployment and monitoring of the impact of the work of teaching assistants remains less effective.

The curriculum satisfactorily supports the development of pupils’ literacy and numeracy skills, although it remains inconsistent in meeting the needs of those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more able. Cross-curricular topics successfully engage pupils’ interest and support their personal development effectively. Curricular planning has improved but sometimes planning does not identify what the outcomes of pupils of different abilities should be and how successful these plans are. There is satisfactory provision, through small group interventions, to support pupils with a range of academic needs. However, specific support for able pupils has a relatively low profile. Good personal, social, health and citizenship education promotes pupils’ personal development well. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and these are supported enthusiastically by pupils.

While in many respects the school cares well for its pupils and their families, the support for pupils who have additional learning needs has not been consistently effective. This is partly because the school does not always receive sufficient timely external support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has been particularly successful in driving forward those aspects of provision which contribute to pupils’ well-being and personal development. They have also ensured that all teaching is at least satisfactory and a significant proportion is good. Standards are now rising at Year 2, as a result of increased monitoring and analysis of pupils’ learning and progress. Until recently, the school has been slow to respond to dips in performance and insufficient priority has been give to using challenging targets to raise standards.

In many respects, governors are very supportive. They carefully manage the finances and have effectively supported the headteacher in creating a stimulating and attractive learning environment. However, they do not analyse pupils’ attainment or the progress they make with sufficient rigour and consequently do not identify, or hold school leaders

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accountable for, areas of underperformance. Over-dependency on the headteacher and staff means that the governing body has too little impact on the direction and development of the school. Governors do not robustly evaluate the success of the school improvement plan or of other initiatives. They ensure that most legal requirements are met, including the satisfactory procedures for safeguarding pupils. A high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being. There is a satisfactory approach to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination by ensuring that all pupils participate in and benefit from the educational opportunities provided, though provision is, at times, patchy for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Governors have not been responsive to the requirement to promote community cohesion. There has been no audit or subsequent plan to address community cohesion issues and, in this important respect, the governing body is not meeting its obligations. While, on a day-to-day basis, the school has effective links with the local community, pupils do not have many opportunities to gain awareness of the diverse cultures typical of the contemporary United Kingdom

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with the standards expected for their age. As not all Nursery children continue to Reception, other children join the group at the beginning of Reception. For all new children, home visits by staff and good induction arrangements ensure that they feel safe and settle quickly. They are well cared for and build very good relationships with staff. Children behave well, play together confidently and enjoy learning. They achieve well in both

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Nursery and Reception and make good progress. As a result, their attainment is above the expected standard in most areas of learning by the end of Reception, particularly in personal and social development, reading and physical development. However, the attainment of boys tends to lag behind that of girls, particularly in writing. Even so, this aspect does not receive sufficient priority in the school’s overall plans to improve provision. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage provides effective support for colleagues and staff have, overall, a good understanding of how young children learn. A stimulating curriculum benefits children’s learning, with a well-judged balance between opportunities for children to choose their own activities and adult-led sessions. Occasionally, however, adults tend to over-direct activities and this inhibits learning. At other times, and particularly in Reception, the most advanced children are not sufficiently challenged in order to make even faster progress. Teaching is almost always good. Adults work together effectively to foster children’s well-being and their learning. There are good systems for observing and assessing children’s knowledge and progress.

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

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and almost all are extremely happy with the school. One parent said, “I love this school. I am very happy that my child can be in such a caring, attentive and loving environment!” Parents and carers feel that their children are extremely happy. Minor criticisms related to issues around the provision of information to parents, the structure of classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, supervision at the end of the school day and the extent to which children’s academic potential is fully realised. These were discussed with the school. Inspection evidence indicates that supervision is generally very effective. The structure of classes is dictated by the number of children admitted. School leaders feel that they work hard to sustain communication with parents. Inspection findings also support the view that pupils do not always reach sufficiently high standards by the end of Year 2. Overall, however, parents and carers feel “ and with justification “ that this is a caring school where pupils’ personal development is supported well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farncombe Church of England Infant and Nursery 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 141 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	76	25	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	82	16	15	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	63	36	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	67	33	31	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	85	81	19	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	58	42	40	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	74	70	30	29	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)	57	54	39	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	66	33	31	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	62	37	35	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	57	40	38	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	92	88	12	11	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	89	85	15	14	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



3 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farncombe Church of England Infant and Nursery School, GU7 3LT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and watching you at work. We found that although yours is a satisfactory school overall, those of you in Nursery and Reception do well.

Our main findings are these:

- You behave well and work hard in lessons.
- You make good progress in Nursery and Reception and more of you are now reaching the standards you are capable of by the end of Year 2.
- You feel that teachers make lessons enjoyable and support you well in your learning.
- You feel very safe and have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily.
- Although there has not always been enough focus on making sure that you have really good skills in writing and mathematics, you enjoy a good range of visits, and many of you get involved in clubs and extra activities
- You contribute outstandingly well to your school and the wider community.
- Those of you who find learning difficult get some extra help, although your progress has been rather variable.
- School leaders work hard to ensure that you are happy and well looked after

We are asking the school to make the following changes so that you do even better:

- Make sure that you all make more rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach higher standards by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure that governors keep a close eye on what happens in school
- Ensure that the school plans to form even closer relationships with the local and wider communities.

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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