

Freemantles School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125477
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340775
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	16
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ron Enticott
Headteacher	Sue Stephens
Date of previous school inspection	5 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of policies and evidence of pupils' progress as well as 57 parental questionnaires.

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

- the progress of different groups of pupils, the convincingness of the school's analyses and the effectiveness of related interventions
- the quality of the curriculum in the secondary phase and the extent to which developments have been embedded
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in planning, monitoring and evaluating developments including community cohesion and equal opportunities.

Information about the school

Freemantles School educates pupils with autism. Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes. The school has moved to a new purpose-built site. The development of the secondary phase, which had only started at the time of the previous inspection, is now complete and new further education provision is in place, increasing pupil numbers from 92 to 115. Despite considerable effort, the school has been unable to recruit a full-time head of the further education provision (sixth form). The school educates a greater number of pupils with challenging behaviour. Nearly all pupils are White British. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. In 2007, the school achieved Sportsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools award. The school is part of the Woking 14'19 Federation.

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

Freemantles is a good school providing excellent care, guidance and support for its pupils and offering excellent provision in its Early Years Foundation Stage and good provision in its sixth form. Governors support and challenge the school well. Parents are excellently engaged and speak extremely highly of the school. Partnership with a wide range of schools and services, such as the health service, are excellent as the school draws on every available source to benefit its pupils. Extensive training opportunities help keep staff knowledge and skills about autism at a high level. Community cohesion is well developed but not as well evaluated as it should be. Leaders and managers drive ambition to succeed well and the school's self-evaluation is thorough, drawing on carefully analysed data on pupils' progress. However, some staff do not feel involved enough in the self-evaluation process and this hinders the school's ability to drive ambition even higher.

Excellent care, guidance and support are built on very well-considered policies and scrupulously applied. The school is an exceptionally welcoming place with new purpose-built accommodation and a warm and friendly ethos. Pupils move through different age phases very smoothly because transitions are extremely carefully planned. Pupils are supported to make the best possible use of what the school offers, and their work with families and agencies is exemplary. Pupils feel safe because safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality and they are very effectively enabled to communicate any concerns to others. They have a good and improving understanding of healthy lifestyles because this is emphasised in the curriculum and in school life. This is recognised through the award of the Sportsmark, Healthy Schools status and Activemark. Economic well-being is well developed by opportunities to use money, participation in mini-enterprise projects, visiting the community and applying their social skills. Pupils' attendance is good and they greatly enjoy school. They contribute well to the school and wider community through the many opportunities for visits and residential trips. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision for the welfare of children is excellent and they thrive. In the sixth form too, care, guidance and support are very strong, leading to pupils growing rapidly in confidence.

The curriculum fully supports the pupils' needs and their learning because it has a wide range of practical, life-relevant activities and is delivered in a way very well suited to the learning needs of the pupils. Great care is taken to relate the curriculum to the different ages and phases. It is greatly enriched by residential trips and learning activities based in the local community. However, it is too soon to judge the impact on learning of the recent changes to the curriculum for pupils aged 14 to 16 years and the development of sensory elements across all subjects. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is

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excellent. In the school as a whole, teaching is good and assessment is carefully used to help inform subsequent lessons. Adults show expertise at meeting the pupils' specific learning needs. Rigorous self-evaluation and training ensures this expertise continues to develop. Lessons are interesting, information and communication technology is used extensively and very well, and relationships between staff and pupils are deeply trusting. Challenging behaviour is well handled by patient and persistent staff. Teaching assistants make a good contribution but teachers do not always deploy them as well as they should in the parts of lessons when whole-class teaching is taking place. The impact of the good curriculum and good teaching means that different groups progress well because the school meets their individual needs well. By the time they reach 16, or when they transfer to further education courses, they achieve a suitable range of qualifications, which the school is seeking to extend further. The school has coped admirably during a period of extensive change, has maintained standards and is seeking further improvements to its curriculum. All this indicates the school has a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning by ensuring that teaching assistants are fully deployed to help pupils learn better when the teacher is speaking to the whole class.
- Drive ambition even higher by ensuring that staff at all levels are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make good progress, achieve well and enjoy their learning because teaching and learning are good. Different groups, including boys and girls, those with challenging behaviour and pupils looked after by the local authority, make good progress because the school takes great care to respond well to their individual needs. Pupils reach challenging targets which are developed from the school's detailed assessment and analysis of previous attainment.

Although attainment is low, pupils achieve well from their varying starting points. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 made good progress when investigating rocks and soil because the teacher made very effective use of the interactive whiteboard to capture pupils' interest. Practical hands-on activities were introduced which motivated pupils to work hard and find out even more. Consequently, pupils were able to identify the colours of rocks and the ways they are used. In another good English lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, the teacher used a 'Big Book' about Noah's Ark to tell the story with suitable animal sounds. This captivated the pupils and encouraged them to respond enthusiastically to the teacher's well-pitched questions. Assessment opportunities were clearly identified and were related to what the children had learned in the previous lessons.

Pupils made good progress towards their ASDAN accreditation during a good information and communication technology lesson for Years, 9, 10 and 11. The structure of the

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lesson was clear, the pace was good, and teaching assistants gave good support in both learning and in encouraging effort. Card symbols were used well to help one of the pupils remember the sequence of activities.

Pupils make good progress in all aspects of their personal and social development. They make very strong progress in learning about themselves and improving their self-esteem because the school emphasises this well. Excellent procedures are in place to keep pupils safe and they feel happy and secure. They have a good understanding of keeping healthy and the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Pupils enjoy school and try hard in lessons because they are encouraged well. They make a good contribution to the school as a community and to the wider community. Pupils' attendance is good and this, combined with good progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, and very good work in careers, means they are being well prepared for their future economic well-being.

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	4
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	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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is supported by good, careful assessment that is up to date and informs

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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subsequent lesson planning. Lessons are well structured and teachers very effectively use approaches suited to pupils with autism, including visual structures, and clear guidelines for behaviour. Pupils with challenging behaviour are managed well so that disruption to lessons is kept to a minimum. The provision enabling pupils to be sometimes taught separately from others works well because the school monitors it carefully and keeps parents fully informed. A continuing programme of training is helping staff feel more confident in this stressful aspect of provision. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and lessons have a good working ethos. Teaching assistants make a valuable and valued contribution. However, teachers do not always ensure they are fully deployed, especially during class teaching sessions, and as a result progress slows.

The broad, balanced and well-considered curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. It provides a good range of activities suited to the learning of pupils with autism and resources are well used to ensure these are successful. There is an excellent range of activities to enrich the curriculum through, for example, residential experiences from Year 2 upwards. Visits to places of worship contribute strongly to pupils' cultural and spiritual understanding and visitors further enhance provision. The school is always alert to ways of improving the curriculum. It has introduced a number of changes including increasing the sensory aspects of learning for some pupils. These innovations are very suitable but have not yet had time to become fully embedded so their full impact cannot yet be measured.

Care, guidance and support are built on a range of very well-considered policies that are scrupulously followed. The school's excellent partnerships with other schools and services, such as the health and social services, are excellently coordinated to get the best for Freemantles' pupils. Through their excellent engagement of parents, the school builds partnerships that are long-lasting and secure. Opportunities for some pupils to stay one or two nights a week at the adjacent children's home is just one example of the way the school makes the extra effort to get the best for the pupils. They learn new skills in a supportive environment which they can then use in their own homes. Career advice and work experience is very carefully tailored to the particular needs of pupils. This excellent range of provision, coupled with the contribution of the good curriculum, leads to the good and improving outcomes for all pupils.

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?

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Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Documentation is very clear, procedures are very strong, and staff fully aware of the importance of this area of the school's provision. Very careful risk assessments are carried out and procedures are faithfully adhered to. The school engages parents extremely well. They profoundly appreciate all the school offers their children and acknowledge the very positive impact it has on the quality of their own lives. Partnerships with others, including the local federation, are excellent. The school puts enormous effort into its relationships with other services to get the best for its pupils. Governors have a wide range of skills that benefit the school. They are committed and forthright in challenging the school about its performance but they are also very supportive. The school tackles any discrimination effectively and promotes equal opportunities well because of its attention to individual needs. Community cohesion is promoted well but the school does not yet monitor and evaluate the impact of this provision as fully as it should. The leaders and managers are good at driving improvement and instilling ambition. Through effective monitoring, they have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They use this information well to guide improvements and spread good practice. However, some staff feel they are not as fully involved as they would wish to be in the processes of self-evaluation. The senior managers are very keen to improve this situation. The school has maintained high expectations and standards through a period of considerable change and provides good value for money.

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	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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
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

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

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The setting for the Early Years Foundation Stage is highly effective. Partnerships with parents and professionals are excellent and the manager ensures she always attends monitoring meetings so the approach to assessment is very secure. The team are excellent practitioners who fully share in the nurturing, learning and development of the children in close partnership with parents. Through seamless teamwork, children's progress is meticulously recorded and monitored and the outcomes are used extremely well to identify the next steps in learning. Teaching is excellent and there is an excellent blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Resources are very well maintained and extremely relevant to the needs of children. For example, children's enthusiasm and curiosity were awakened by the Brown Bear Story Bag. Leadership and management are outstanding. The manager is an inspiration to all her staff because of her enabling, rigorous and thoughtful approach to all aspects of the provision. All the adults work effectively and efficiently as a team guiding children in their learning, so they make rapid progress towards the Early Learning Goals from their low starting points.

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

Sixth form

In this comparatively new provision, leadership and management have been successfully shared by two senior staff. This has worked well because their respective roles are very clear and they have expertise in this age phase. However, the school is rightly actively seeking to appoint a full-time manager to develop the provision further. Pupils make good progress because teaching is well matched to their needs and capabilities and careful assessments are made of achievements. Lessons move along at a good pace and are often enlivened by humour. Activities underpinned by the good curriculum are practical, very relevant to the age and interests of pupils and well presented. For example, in a careers lesson, good use was made of information and communication technology to explain different skills associated with different types of work and then pupils made posters to reinforce this. A suitable and increasing range of qualifications are offered. Staff work closely together as a team and relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. Pupils' welfare is excellent because staff know pupils and their individual needs extremely well.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a high response rate to the parent questionnaires. They were overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the great appreciation parents expressed when meeting the lead inspector. Typical of the numerous positive comments were, 'Freemantles is an exceptional school ' a real life saver' and 'My child has improved more than I ever expected.' A very few parents felt their children were not making enough progress or that the school helped them sufficiently well to support their children's learning, but inspectors did not find evidence to support this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Freemantles 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 115 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	67	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	82	10	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	56	25	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	47	25	44	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	63	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	58	21	37	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	60	23	40	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)	31	54	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	74	14	25	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	58	22	39	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	65	17	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	37	65	16	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	75	14	25	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 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.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freemantles School, Woking GU22 0AN

My colleague and I enjoyed meeting you when we inspected your school recently. Thank you for talking to us and letting us know your views about your school.

Freemantles is a good school. It is led and managed well. Staff provide you with excellent care and support. You behave well and try hard in your lessons. Teaching is good so you make good progress and older pupils take a good range of examinations. The curriculum is well suited to the way you learn and the teachers provide you with lots of exciting extra activities.

There are two things the school could do better so I have asked the headteacher to:

- improve teaching by making sure all staff are helping you learn when the teacher is speaking to the whole class
- make sure all staff are even more fully involved when the school is checking what it does well and what it can improve.

I hope you will continue to do your best in lessons. I am sure you can keep this up.

With every good wish for your future

Yours sincerely

Michael Farrell

Lead Inspector

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