

Farnsfield St Michael's Church of England Primary (Voluntary Aided) School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134202
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	341441
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Bob Smith
Headteacher	Mr Tony Walker
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The majority of the available time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors visited 15 lessons ensuring that all of the teaching staff, including those working with intervention groups, were seen. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of children. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books and a wide range of documentation including school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, records of pupils' progress, 61 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires received from staff and pupils.

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

- current attainment and progress in relation to school targets and the effectiveness of action taken to raise attainment in mathematics
- the impact of teaching and the use of assessment on pupils' progress
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating school performance and in securing improvement.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school that serves the village of Farnsfield and many of the former mining villages in the surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as are the proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with statements of particular needs. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is in two Reception classes. A before- and after-school club on site is managed by the school and was observed as part of the inspection.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This happy and successful school has made considerable improvement in the last four years. Attainment is rising because of the vision and hard work of school leaders and staff. All are highly committed to pupils' well-being and personal development. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school, where they benefit from a very attractive and welcoming learning environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong and very evident in the daily life of the school. Because the vast majority of pupils are willing to take responsibility, behave exceptionally well and show respect to their peers, adults and visitors, they contribute much to the school community. However, their knowledge and understanding of the wider national community are more limited, as are their opportunities to work alongside others from different backgrounds. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of diet and fitness to their health and take full advantage of the many additional activities, sports and clubs provided.

All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well because teaching and learning are mostly good and occasionally outstanding. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and children get an excellent start to their education. Pupils make good progress through Years 1 to 6, and attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen to be above average. Because staff have been particularly successful in focusing on the development of pupils' reading and writing skills, the most recent results of the Year 6 English tests, rose sharply to be above average. However, similar improvement has yet to be seen in mathematics and attainment remains below that in English. In some mathematics lessons, learning tasks are not sufficiently challenging and the marking of pupils' number work does not always give enough guidance on how to improve.

A varied and enjoyable curriculum is helping pupils to reach high standards in art, music, information and communication technology, and physical education. Pupils' personal development benefits from the excellent quality of care, guidance and support that they receive from staff and the various external agencies who work in partnership with the school. Preparation for pupils' future economic well-being is good because, in addition to their excellent attendance and good progress being made in the development of basic skills, they acquire good team-working skills and demonstrate an increasing capacity to work independently.

The headteacher and senior staff lead the school well and there is a strong emphasis on positive achievement for all. Thorough systems for tracking pupils' progress towards their challenging targets are making a significant contribution to the rise in attainment and show the school's good capacity for continued improvement. Despite carrying

vacancies, the governing body makes a good contribution to the management of the school. A core of experienced governors ensures that all statutory responsibilities, especially in safeguarding, are fully met, and, at all times, governors challenge and support school leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 to match at least that in English by ensuring that:
 - learning activities are appropriately challenging, particularly for those pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels
 - the marking of work gives pupils clear guidance on their next steps in learning.
- Develop and implement an effective strategy to promote community cohesion and strengthen pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity by:
 - analysing the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to work alongside others of different backgrounds
 - evaluating on a regular basis the impact of the school's work to promote community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From Reception to Year 6, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. When they start in Reception, the skills of most children, in all areas of learning, are generally consistent with those usually found in children of their age. They make rapid progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, many are exceeding the early learning goals. This good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and attainment at the end of Year 2 has risen to be above average. The school has concentrated successfully on raising standards in English and action to improve pupils' reading and writing skills has had a marked effect. The 2009 national test results rose to be significantly above average at both Level 4 or above and Level 5. Similar attention is now being given to mathematics and observations of lessons and of pupils' work during the inspection confirm that attainment, while broadly average, is rising.

Pupils' love of school is clearly reflected in their excellent behaviour and attendance. Excellent relationships are a feature of all aspects of school life. Pupils are proud of their school and are good ambassadors on their visits into the local and wider community. They are friendly and polite towards each other, staff and visitors, and leave school as mature and socially confident young people, well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They know which foods are good for them and the effects of exercise on their body. 'This is a healthy school', as one Year 1 pupil remarked.

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

They have a good awareness of how to stay safe and speak enthusiastically of their responsibilities, including being on the school council or the Eco committee, as assembly monitors and taking charge of the school bank. Pupils report that instances of bullying are rare. They say that they fully trust the adults in the school and know that someone will help them if the need arises. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They accept and respect each other's differences, but cultural development is less strong because pupils do not have enough awareness of people from other cultures, religions and backgrounds.

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	3
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	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Common features of all lessons are excellent relationships and high expectations. Pupils are keen to learn and the effective use of interactive whiteboards stimulates interest and engagement. In many lessons, and particularly in English, assessment information is used well to plan learning tasks that are well matched to pupils' needs and promote independence in learning. This was seen in an outstanding Year 2 lesson, for example, where the effective use of role play actively engaged pupils of all attainment levels and

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

led to some high-quality extended writing. In some mathematics lessons, however, pupils sit for too long listening to teachers when they could be pressing ahead with their own activities, and the learning tasks do not offer enough challenge to higher-attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive effective support from teaching assistants.

The school offers a good curriculum that successfully builds on the foundations established in Reception and meets the needs of pupils well. It motivates pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to work hard and try their best. There is an appropriate focus on the development of literacy and numeracy. In collaboration with a local cluster of schools, the curriculum is planned around topics that make meaningful and exciting links between subjects. This is particularly strong in the way pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills are developed in all subjects. Pupils benefit from a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and the arts. All pupils have the opportunity to experience a variety of residential visits. These enhance the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

The vast majority of parents and carers say that the school is very caring. This is borne out by inspection findings. Pupils are well looked after and pupils say that the school is safe and secure place. Pupils are happy to go to staff with any concerns. All adults are particularly sensitive to the more needy pupils. Pupils learn from their example; even the very youngest children demonstrate sensitivity and care towards one another. A family support group for parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enhances the support these pupils receive. The before- and after-school provision is a successful addition. It is well attended and parents greatly appreciate it.

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?

A continuing drive for improvement, led by the headteacher and fully supported by all senior leaders and staff, is at the heart of a school in which pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. Underpinning the successful action taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection is the effective monitoring of the work of the school and, in particular, the more effective use of pupil performance information to set targets and to track each pupil's progress. The governing body is very supportive. Governors understand the school's strengths well and have a good involvement in shaping its future direction, including playing a central role in driving through the

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

planned extension of the premises. Governors ensure that statutory requirements are met, including the good procedures for safeguarding pupils. A very high priority is given to pupils' safety and well-being. Roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding are clearly defined and unambiguous. Potential discrimination is tackled resolutely. Equality of opportunity is promoted well, for example by rigorously evaluating the performance of all pupils to ensure that provision meets the needs of all. Promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. While there is very strong engagement with local and ecological issues and some developing global links, pupils have relatively few opportunities to engage with the diverse cultures which characterise contemporary Britain.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Because of the high quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision has improved since the last inspection and is now outstanding. Consistently good and often outstanding teaching ensures that virtually all children achieve the early learning goals, in all areas of their learning, and the majority exceed them. Adults take great care to ensure children are safe, and regular risk assessments and reminders about the dangers of working with tools and equipment feature strongly. The setting provides an excellent learning environment with seamless use of the attractive outdoor learning area. Children rush into school with a smile on their faces and an eagerness to learn. The excellent curriculum takes close account of children's interests and natural curiosity and includes a sensible balance of adult-directed and free-play activities. Teamwork, planning and assessment are of high

quality. Regular observations provide accurate information on children's progress across all the areas of learning. This information is used very effectively to plan their next steps in learning. There is a highly effective daily focus on the teaching of letters and sounds. Activities are linked to a central theme which adds both meaning and interest for the children. The children are currently working on activities linked to a theme on famous paintings. This has led to some excellent model making and painting of angels' wings. Role play is used very well to develop literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils visit an 'opticians' after making a telephone appointment. The excellent links with parents and carers, and with pre-school providers, ensure that the transition into school is smooth and trouble-free.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Parents express very positive views. All 13 questionnaire statements were approved or strongly approved almost unanimously. Parents and carers feel that their children greatly enjoy school, that they are safe and that they make good progress in their learning. They believe that the school is well managed and that teaching is good. Typical of the many comments was, 'School is fantastic. My child has thrived in all areas of learning. Teachers are great and have helped my child to achieve where she is now.' Inspection findings firmly endorse parents' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farnsfield St Michael's Church of England Primary (Voluntary Aided) 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	72	14	23	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	49	82	10	17	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	45	31	53	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	48	29	48	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	70	17	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	53	27	45	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	55	25	42	2	3	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)	27	48	26	46	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	50	25	43	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	37	31	54	3	5	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	34	37	63	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	62	22	37	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	63	21	35	0	0	1	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.



8 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farnsfield St Michael's Church of England Primary (Voluntary Aided) School, Farnsfield, NG22 8JZ

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you what we found. First I would like to say thank you for making us feel so welcome and making our visit one that we will remember for a long time. We have told your teachers how you were all really helpful and polite, and it was good to hear how much you enjoy school and to listen to your singing in assembly.

We agree with you and your parents that this is a good school and one that is helping you to do well. This is seen in the good progress that you make as you move through the school. Your excellent behaviour in lessons is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. This is one of the reasons why you are doing well. We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better by giving you more challenging work in mathematics and closer guidance in the marking of your number work about what you have to do to take the next steps in learning.

There is a really friendly and positive atmosphere in the school and you are looked after exceptionally well. Outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives the youngest of you an excellent start to school life. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences. To broaden these further we have asked the school to develop links with other schools so that you have the chance to work alongside children who have different experiences to share. You know that all the staff work hard to keep you safe and healthy.

Your headteacher leads the school well and, together with staff and governors, makes sure that you make the most of your time there. You are key players in the school's success and, having met you, we know you will all want to continue to play your part in helping it to be even better.

Yours sincerely

Kenneth Thomas

Lead inspector

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