

Farncombe Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Grays Road, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3LT

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good and they learn quickly in most lessons.
- Pupils' progress is especially strong in reading because skills are introduced systematically and they read regularly to adults.
- Pupils' attainment has risen since the previous inspection and is now consistently above average by the end of Year 2.
- Teaching is good. Work is carefully chosen to make pupils think hard, based on teachers' good understanding of what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are sociable and articulate and develop a love of learning.
- Clubs, visits and activities such as the 'Grandparents Tea-Party' make learning exciting and ensure that pupils thoroughly enjoy school.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher and governing body has helped the school to improve quickly since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress is more uneven in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance about how to use their well-developed knowledge of letters and sounds in their writing.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to improve spelling and handwriting by writing in different subjects.
- The role of some staff with responsibilities in driving improvement and checking the impact of initiatives is not strong enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 13 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body, with members of staff and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 60 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector also talked to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own assessment data, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector analysed 15 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized infant school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes, one of which also includes some Year 1 pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for additional funding (the pupil premium).
- In 2011, an acting headteacher led the school for a five month period during the temporary absence of the headteacher.
- The 'Earlybirds' club (a before-school club) is managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2 so that it is consistently good by:
 - ensuring that teachers give clear guidance and support to pupils to help them to use their knowledge of letters and sounds in their writing, especially when spelling new words
 - paying closer attention to ensuring that pupils practise and develop accurate spelling and handwriting, for instance by using their skills more regularly in literacy and in a range of other subjects.
- Strengthen the role of staff with responsibilities by giving them more involvement in checking the quality of teaching and learning and evaluating whether initiatives are having the desired effect.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children enter the school with the abilities expected for their age. They make good progress. Attainment has risen since the previous inspection. It is now consistently above average.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children quickly develop early reading and writing skills. For instance, the children write shopping lists, with the most able already showing an awareness of letter sounds, and recognising simple words in books. Children's personal skills develop well and they quickly develop good independence and confidence.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' skills in reading and numeracy improve rapidly. Pupils develop a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about books that they enjoy. They confidently 'sound-out' new words making good use of their well-developed knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to help with their reading. In mathematics lessons, pupils solve problems confidently, and have a good recall of 'number facts'.
- Pupils' progress in writing in Years 1 and 2, while sometimes good, is more uneven across the school. Pupils enjoy writing and are keen to get their ideas down on paper but their spelling is often inaccurate and, in Years 1 and 2, they do not always form their letters correctly.
- Potential underachievement is identified and tackled quickly so that any gaps between the learning of different groups are soon closed. This includes pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding. All do equally well because they are fully included in initiatives to improve learning.
- One of the reasons why attainment in mathematics has been rising has been because there has been focused support for more-able pupils in Year 2 to ensure that they fulfil their potential.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Good relationships are fostered, work is carefully matched to their needs and basic skills improve quickly in lessons.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Throughout the school, there is a buzz of excitement and enjoyment in lessons because learning is made purposeful and pupils are often expected to try ideas out for themselves.
- Teachers get on well with pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. Pupils enjoy lessons because teachers link subjects together to make learning interesting. For example, in a mathematics lesson, work on shapes was made purposeful as pupils looked for shapes in the school building and used shapes to build models.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.
 - Children are successfully encouraged to explore their own ideas.
 - There is a good balance of activities taken by the teachers and those where children choose for themselves what they are going to do.
 - There are many opportunities for children to work outside where they learn to work together for example when using building blocks to build a train and platform.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils read frequently to adults and are grouped by ability for work linking sounds with letters so that the work is pitched at the right level. However, writing develops less evenly; teachers do not always establish close enough links between writing and letters and sounds that have been learnt so that pupils are helped to improve their spelling, and they do not always reinforce spelling or handwriting in lessons by, for example, letting pupils write more frequently.
- There is good challenge in numeracy lessons with the most able 'stretched' at the right level, ensuring that skills improve quickly. Teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves when carrying out investigations and marking gives good guidance about 'next steps' in learning. For example, Year 2 pupils explain clearly how they are working on learning multiplication

tables as one of their targets.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons, and work is well matched to pupils' needs. Small group activities at other times focus on developing basic skills and help pupils to learn quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils learn quickly in lessons because they behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils make comments such as, 'We all look after each other' and 'We try to work hard in lessons so that we can learn more quickly'. Parents and carers are also very positive about children's behaviour.
- Pupils support each other well in lessons and they work hard. Just occasionally they become inattentive if expected to sit on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons. There is a delightful atmosphere at playtimes as pupils of different ages play together, sensibly sharing resources such as ribbons and other equipment.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, children persevere well, showing good levels of concentration when, for example, exploring how water flows down guttering.
- Pupils attend school regularly and thoroughly enjoy their work and other activities. They speak very positively about 'Wow Days' where they take part in activities such as an 'Olympic Opening Ceremony'.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that 'there is very little falling out and no bullying'. They know who to turn to if they have a worry and are confident that problems are sorted out quickly. They have a good understanding of the dangers they may face in the wider world, for example explaining clearly about how to use the railway crossing near to the school.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination. Good use is made of pupil premium funding to ensure that eligible pupils are able to take part in all activities.
- The well-attended 'Earlybirds Club' is enjoyed by pupils. Members of staff plan interesting activities that give pupils a good start to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and, with the good backing of other staff, has ensured that pupils' attainment has risen since the previous inspection.
- Where pupils are in danger of falling behind it is identified and tackled quickly. For example, there has been a recent focus on improving pupils' attainment in mathematics and this has been achieved through a sharp focus on improving teaching and making lessons more interesting.
- The headteacher has a good track record for improving teaching. Training is closely matched to the needs of the school and, in subjects such as mathematics, has helped to improve teaching. Teachers are set challenging targets for their own performance related to improving pupils' achievement and the resulting improvements are appropriately linked to pay arrangements and have been a key reason why pupils are now making better progress across the school.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly. Other members of staff with responsibilities for subjects are enthusiastic but they have too little opportunity to visit lessons or to analyse data so that they can only play a limited part in driving improvement and checking that initiatives are working. Some of them are new to their roles and have not yet had time to develop their responsibilities fully.
- The local authority supports the school well. Its help in finding an acting headteacher for the school when the headteacher was absent was especially beneficial as it ensured that there was no dip in the rapid pace of improvement.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Members of staff are diligent about keeping

pupils safe when, for example, walking to the swimming pool.

- Although there are some missed opportunities, in a range of subjects, for pupils to practise their writing, the school provides interesting activities both in and out of lessons. This is a major reason why pupils enjoy school so much and develop good values. For example, pupils show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for a children’s home, and they happily write prayers and take part in acts of worship.
- The school works very closely with parents and carers. Their positive views are summed up by the comments of one who wrote that ‘We are so impressed by the strong sense of community encouraged by the school and the care and respect children show each other.’
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors analyse information they receive about pupils’ achievement carefully and this means that they have a good grasp of how well pupils are doing and can ask probing questions in meetings.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses because they are all involved in school visits.
 - The governing body works well with the headteacher to ensure that pupil premium funding is used to good effect. For example, the employment of a home–school link worker has helped to improve attendance. A recently established ‘nurture’ group (where pupils learn to play and work together) is funded by the pupil premium and is already improving pupils’ confidence and self-esteem in lessons.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	125145
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	402315

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	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marion Davies
Headteacher	Andrea Simonsson
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 April 2010
Telephone number	01483 424933
Fax number	01483 419463
Email address	office@farncombe.surrey.sch.uk

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