

Farnham Heath End School

Hale Reeds, Farnham, Farnham, GU9 9BM

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Leaders and managers have been relentless in their drive to improve the quality of teaching in all areas of the school, so that teaching is now consistently good, and some is outstanding.
- As a result, students' progress throughout the school is improving and students achieve well.
- Students' good behaviour and positive attitudes help them to learn well. Students feel very safe in school, and say that they are not concerned about any form of bullying.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is continuously adjusted to meet students' different abilities and interests well. The school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders have very high ambitions for the school. Their success in remedying the weaknesses identified by the last inspection and their concerted drive to raise standards demonstrate the school's strong capacity for further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers check students' learning and progress thoroughly enough during lessons, so that they can adapt activities to make sure the work stretches all the students sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always give students sufficiently detailed information to ensure that they know what they are doing well, and what would make their work even better.
- On a few occasions, learning is too slow because teachers do not give students enough opportunities to learn for themselves and from each other.
- Although students' performance in English has improved strongly, not all subject teachers give students enough help to improve their writing skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of lessons taken by 35 teachers, five of them jointly with senior leaders. They also made shorter visits to a number of other lessons, tutor group meetings and an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and met groups of students to discuss their experience of the school, focusing particularly on their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors also met the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff including senior and middle leaders, and visitors to the school's open morning. The lead inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on students' attainment and progress; improvement plans; safeguarding procedures; behaviour and attendance records; and records of school leaders' lesson observations.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspectors took account of the 104 responses to the on-line Parent View survey which were submitted before or during the inspection, as well as one letter from a parent, and 51 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Robin Gaff, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heidi Boreham	Additional Inspector
Haydn Evans	Additional Inspector
Rukhsana Sheikh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-size secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government) is below average.
- Just less than 10% of students are supported through school action, and approximately 7% are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions are in both cases below the national average.
- A very small number of Year 11 students follow vocational courses for one day per week at local further education colleges.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Several members of the extended leadership team have been appointed to their posts in the last two years.
- A nursery operates on the school site. This is not managed by the school's governing body, and will be inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' progress so that it is outstanding by ensuring that all teachers regularly:
 - check students' learning and progress thoroughly during lessons and adjust activities when necessary
 - give students written comments that will help them build on their strengths and make sure they understand exactly what to do to make their work even better
 - give students opportunities to work and to learn independently.
- Implement fully the school's new policy which requires all teachers to make sure that students spell correctly, and use the appropriate subject-specific language.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school with broadly average standards of attainment. They make good progress in their learning throughout the school, enabling them to perform well in their GCSE examinations.
- The proportion of students gaining at least five grade A* to C passes at GCSE including English and mathematics was above the national average in 2010, but was below average in 2011. Results, however, in 2012 improved considerably, especially in English and mathematics because school leaders had successfully tackled the causes of this dip. The school's own reliable information about current Year 11 students shows that their attainment, too, is higher than in previous years.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs achieve at least as well as other students because teachers and teaching assistants give them the additional help they need to do as well as their peers. The school has made effective use of the extra money from pupil premium funding to employ additional staff, who provide good support to smaller groups of students. This helps to reduce any gaps in attainment between students with differing needs.
- The school also ensures that the very small number of students who study part time at local colleges achieve well; staff visit regularly to make sure that their courses meet the students' needs and are well taught, and all health and safety measures are implemented.
- Students enjoy reading; school records and conversations with students show that they read widely. By the time they leave, most have also acquired good skills in writing accurately and for a range of purposes. However, not all teachers check that students spell words correctly, including those which are specific to particular subjects.
- Students say that they mostly enjoy their lessons. They report that they know what standards they are reaching and, in general terms at least, what they must do to reach their targets. They relate well to their teachers, and are attentive to them and to each other in class. For example, in an outstanding biology lesson, students made excellent progress in learning about how animals' digestive systems process food, because the teacher's lively presentation kept them interested and eager to learn. She frequently checked their understanding and gave them plenty of opportunities to work independently in groups and pairs.
- In the small number of lessons where students do not learn fast enough, teachers spend too long explaining topics, with the result that students lose focus.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students make good progress over time throughout the school, including in English and mathematics, because teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers know their subjects well and plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of different groups, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers make sure lessons include a good range of tasks which stretch the most able and allow lower attaining students to make good progress. They do not always adapt activities sufficiently when students do not respond as they expected.
- Most teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace and that very little time is wasted when students change from one activity to another. They give students plenty of chances to learn for themselves and from each other. For instance, in an outstanding lesson on *Macbeth*, Year 11 students acted out a rapid succession of different scenes from the play, which they said 'really brought the characters to life'. The teacher reminded students of the key quotations they needed to learn, constantly checked their progress, and made sure they understood how to use their knowledge to answer examination questions successfully.
- In weaker lessons, however, teachers did not plan sufficiently interesting activities or they talked too much, so that students' attention wandered.

- Teachers mark students' written work regularly and accurately. Most give students detailed comments about their strengths and weaknesses so that they understand what they need to do to improve their work. In a few cases, however, teachers' comments (for example, well done!) are too general to be helpful.
- Most parents and carers in the Parent View survey indicated that they believed their children were well taught and made good progress. A small number did not agree that their children received appropriate homework for their age. Inspectors, however, found that the school makes good use of homework to reinforce and extend students' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons is rarely less than good and is sometimes outstanding, demonstrating students' good moral and social development. On the very few occasions when students' behaviour requires improvement, this is usually because of weaker teaching and ill-chosen activities.
- The atmosphere in school is calm and friendly because staff provide good examples of behaviour and make sure students know the standard of behaviour that is required of them. Visitors to the school's open morning commented on how much students' behaviour outside the school had improved in recent years.
- The overall improvement in behaviour is confirmed by the considerable drop in the number of exclusions over the last year. Students understand and support the more robust system of rewards and sanctions which leaders have introduced since the last inspection. Students think the system is fair and say that most staff apply rules consistently.
- Racist and bullying incidents have declined sharply in recent years and are now rare. Students confirm that that staff respond quickly when they do occur and deal with them very effectively. Students gain a good understanding of different types of bullying through the school's tutorial programme and know why, for example, homophobic language is unacceptable.
- Students feel very safe in school and speak confidently about risks they may encounter outside it. Attendance has been above average for the last three years and continues to rise. Punctuality is good.
- A large majority of parents, in both the school's own and Parents' View survey, agreed that the school makes sure students are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by senior and middle leaders, many of whom are new to their posts, have successfully shared with staff their passionate commitment to raising students' achievement.
- Leaders manage the staff's performance well. Their unremitting drive to improve teaching, judged satisfactory at the last inspection, has ensured that this is now consistently good. As a result, students achieve well, even though leaders have not yet succeeded in completely eliminating weak practice. They observe teachers regularly and with a relentless focus on accelerating students' progress, and make sure that all teachers know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- The headteacher has used payment scales well to recruit, reward and retain good teachers. Leaders have established a thorough training programme, resulting in clear improvements, for example in the teaching of mathematics. Newly qualified staff speak highly of the support they have received from all staff, not just from their managers, in helping them to become effective teachers.
- The school has received good support from its school improvement adviser, appointed by the local authority, especially in helping new leaders to quickly get to grips with their responsibilities.
- Staff assess all students' progress very regularly, and leaders use the results to enhance

teachers' ability to plan appropriate activities for students of all abilities.

- Leaders regularly review the curriculum to ensure that it provides a good match to students' interests and abilities. They are phasing out early entry for GCSE in modern foreign languages, although not because this has limited more able students' attainment.
- Leaders have reduced the number of vocational courses to make sure that students receive a firmer grounding in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. There is now a stronger focus on improving students' ability to write accurately, but this has not yet been consistently implemented across the school.
- The school promotes students' spiritual and cultural development well by, for example, providing a good range of trips, visits, including to other countries, and special events.
- Not all parents agree that they receive valuable information from the school about their children's progress. Nevertheless, the school ensures that parents receive regular, detailed progress reports, and encourages them to contact the school if they have any concerns.
- The school is a harmonious community. Leaders' success in promoting equal opportunities and stamping out any form of discrimination is demonstrated by the fact that students whose circumstances make them vulnerable achieve as well as their classmates, and by the school's clear and consistently applied policies on racism and gender-based harassment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - governors bring a range of expertise to the school, know the school well, and are fully involved in its activities
 - governors are aware of the quality of teaching in the school, and how well students achieve because they scrutinise and debate the regular, detailed reports they receive from senior leaders
 - they manage the school's finances well and hold leaders to account for the way in which increases in pay are used to reward teachers
 - they ensure that pupil premium money is used appropriately, for example to make sure that additional staff help to improve students' achievement.

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	125428
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	406304

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	908
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Spencer
Headteacher	Nick Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 February 2011
Telephone number	01252 733351
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