

Farncombe Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125145
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	293208
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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 on roll	153
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Davies
Headteacher	Mrs A Simonsson
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2001
School address	Grays Road Farncombe Godalming GU7 3LT
Telephone number	01483 424933
Fax number	01483 419463

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Farncombe is a smaller than average Church of England school. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is above the national average and well above the Surrey average. The number of children with English as an additional language is low. The percentage of children with statements of special educational needs is just above the national average and the number of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school has the bronze and silver Eco Awards and is working towards Healthy Schools Status in 2008-9.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Farncombe is a good school, which is improving rapidly. The pupils are achieving well, are outstandingly well behaved and show very good attitudes to school and learning. Outstanding leadership by the headteacher in the last year has secured very good improvements. After a period of considerable unrest due to changes in headteacher and staffing, one parent spoke for many when observing, 'I have never been more confident in the leadership and the direction the school is moving.'

Pupils' standards are now above average and they achieve well because the teaching and curriculum are good. There is excellent provision in the Foundation Stage, where teachers plan stimulating and challenging activities and children are given an outstanding start to their education. When they join the school in the Nursery, their attainment is generally below what is normally expected at this age. They make very good progress and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, their attainment is close to that expected for their age. Standards in Year 2 are rising as the impact of the improved provision across the school takes effect. Last year standards in Year 2 were below average. This year they are above average overall. Although assessment procedures are now being used well in the main to ensure teachers plan work that is closely matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils, these procedures are not yet fully embedded. Staff are planning to further refine the systems to make sure recent good progress is sustained over time.

The staff take outstanding care of the pupils and support them exceptionally well. This has a significant impact on pupils' outstanding personal development. Pupils enjoy participating in a very good range of extra activities after school and during lunchtime. Attendance rates are improving and are now in line with those of most schools because pupils enjoy being at school so much. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show caring attitudes to each other and the environment. They reflect thoughtfully in assemblies on values such as cooperation, sharing and kindness. Pupils have a high level of respect for different cultures and religions. They have a good understanding of healthy living and the importance of exercise through the many opportunities to play games and when taking part in weekly swimming sessions. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, feel safe from harm or harassment because the staff are vigilant to their needs, enabling them to learn and play in a safe and secure learning environment.

The headteacher, all staff and governors know the school's strengths very well and what needs to improve further. Although subject leaders are taking greater control over their areas of expertise, there are still aspects of their role in monitoring their subjects that could be enhanced. The school's view of itself is entirely accurate. Its track record of raising standards and effective leadership show that it has a very good capacity to continue improving. There are good partnerships with the community, the local church and with other schools and organisations. Parents think highly of the school and what it offers their children, one typically commenting, 'I would like to acknowledge what a great school Farncombe is, the staff are excellent and all the children very happy and confident.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine the way teachers use assessments and tracking systems to meet the needs of pupils consistently in all subjects.

- Enhance the role of the subject leaders so that they take greater responsibility for monitoring and developing provision in their subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school their standards are generally below those expected for their age, especially in social and language development. By the time they enter Year 1 they have made very good progress and achieved very well. Standards are close to what is usually expected for children of their age. Progress is especially good in personal development as children learn to get along very well together and develop a thirst for learning. National assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2006 showed a significant decline on previous years for very well identified reasons of staffing turbulence. The innovations introduced by the new headteacher, and followed rigorously by all staff, have enabled significant progress to be made by all pupils. The tracking systems, and unvalidated results of the 2007 national assessments, show that standards now are above average. In particular the number of pupils who reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics is much higher than normally seen nationally. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive much focused help, enabling them to make significant strides in meeting their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils are very happy and enjoy the wealth of learning activities provided. They enjoy exercise and sport and understand the importance of healthy eating. Relationships are outstanding. As one boy said, 'I like coming to school to be with all my friends.' This contributes very positively to the pupils' very good attitudes to learning, which prepares them well for the future. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to tell if they are unhappy because adults provide excellent support. Pupils behave excellently. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school assemblies are excellent periods of quiet reflection that all involved enjoy. Pupils enjoy the many community activities, especially with the local church. Through the school council pupils make a valuable contribution to school life and are proud of the markings they chose for the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and this is reflected in the progress pupils make. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They are valued by teachers and are encouraged to work collaboratively. One boy remarked that he enjoyed learning at school because, 'When I grow up I will know everything.' In the Foundation Stage, children learn about the world and themselves through relevant and stimulating activities. Throughout the school, teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. They plan their work meticulously and make good use of resources, computers and interactive whiteboards. These motivate the pupils and help to focus their learning. Pupils benefit from teachers' good questioning skills. Most lessons are briskly paced and comprise challenging and engaging activities so the pupils respond well with enthusiasm. However, there are a few occasions when pupils spend too long

on the carpet and their time is less focused. Marking is regular, supportive and always evaluative giving clear guidance about how pupils can improve their work. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning and provide very effective help for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides the pupils with an interesting range of activities and additional learning experiences. The themed weeks, such as 'feeling good' and 'food awareness' weeks and the number and extent of extra curricular activities are real strengths. Pupils especially enjoy their studies of environmental matters such as working in the school garden and learning about wild life in woodland areas. The weekly activity afternoons, which include cookery, art, nature, games, dance and drama, are a recent, much appreciated, initiative. Pupils and parents are enthusiastic about this innovation and the school council is involved in evaluating these activities. The school has plans in place to continue to modify and enrich the curriculum further in this way. SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) lessons each week provide valuable time for pupils to explore issues to develop their confidence and self awareness. The opportunities for pupils to practise their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good and clear planning allows subjects to interlink successfully. For example, metal detectors have proved to be an exciting resource for pupils' exploration of their world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's ethos of care, justice, equality and respect is reflected in all of its work. All staff are totally committed to this continuous high standard of care for pupils. Arrangements for child protection and risk assessments are rigorously applied and reviewed. Health and safety procedures are also reviewed regularly and are very effective. Pupils are taught how to take care of themselves and others and they talk about the trust they have in the adults in school. One parent summed up the views of most, 'The headteacher and teachers are always there to help our child and ourselves'. The overwhelming view of parents is that the school successfully supports their children and families. Pupils' academic development is now being assessed and tracked thoroughly. However, these arrangements are quite new and have yet to be fully embedded in day-to-day practice. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are very well nurtured and supported. Consequently, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Teamwork is of a very good quality and everyone plays a valuable part in moving the school forward. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and an inspiration to all who work in the school. Governors and parents provide good support. One of the key roles of all staff is to follow the headteacher's exemplary lead and relate effectively with all pupils, parents and the local community. In this aim they are very successful.

There is a clear understanding of strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is effective. The school development plan provides clear guidance

on relevant issues for raising standards and takes into consideration support and initiatives from all sources. The governing body is involved in this process and governors are beginning to bring a wide range of skills to bear as they act as critical friends and request explanations where this is judged to be necessary.

The opinions of parents and pupils are always valued and frequently acted upon. The school has good links with other schools and organisations to give pupils every possible opportunity. Management at all levels is improving with effective systems in place to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and learning. The role of the subject leaders is developing, but their opportunities to monitor and demonstrate teaching in their subjects are still rather few. Within the school there is a high commitment to include all pupils in all activities and the care and concern for all pupils is high priority. Parents value this and see it as an important feature of the school. The school is well placed to continue its successes and has a very good capacity to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 June 2007

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you very much for welcoming us so warmly during our recent visit to your school. Thanks especially to those children who helped us find our way around and those who talked to us during the inspection. We did appreciate all the help and comments which you offered.

We are glad to tell you that we think your school is good and provides you with a very good start to your education. We were particularly pleased with these things:

- your headteacher and staff do a very good job in organising the school and looking after you
- you are all making very good progress with your work
- you all clearly enjoy being in school
- you behave very well, work hard and listen carefully to your teachers; this helps you to succeed at school
- all the adults in the school look after you very carefully; they always make sure that you get help if you need it
- your school council does a great job.

Your teachers are always trying to help you do even better in lessons and I have asked them to make sure you are all building on what you already know in all subjects. We also think they should be able to use their special skills and interests in different subjects to help each other to make your lessons even better. You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what they say. Then you will all continue to make really good progress in your learning.

With best wishes,

David Marshall

Lead Inspector