

Farlow CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123475
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	340349
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	33
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Rodenhurst
Headteacher	Alison Davies
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Seven lessons were observed. Two full-time teachers, one part-time teacher and all the support staff were seen working with children. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and members of staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and scrutinised a wide range of documents including the school development plan, school assessment and tracking data and pupils' books. Seventeen parental questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly children's typical attainment on entry and provision for the outdoor curriculum
- the consistency of teaching across the school
- the accuracy and rigour of the school's assessment and tracking systems.

Information about the school

Farlow CofE is a very small primary school situated in an isolated rural area of Shropshire. Children are taught in two classes, a Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 class with 15 children and a Key Stage 2 class with 18. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities is high, although there are currently no children with a statement of educational need. Pupil mobility is high and more children leave or join the school midway through their primary education than is the norm. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools award, the Quality Mark and the Active Mark.

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

Farlow C of E Primary is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. The school has a good understanding of how well it is doing and what needs to be done next. Hence, it has a good capacity to maintain and sustain improvement. The headteacher provides a clear sense of purpose and direction, clearly linked to school improvement. Strong teamwork between the headteacher, senior staff, the governing body and the local authority has ensured that teaching and learning have improved, assessment and tracking systems have been strengthened, the curriculum has been enhanced considerably and clear priorities have been set for further improvement. Parents are extremely supportive of the school. One parent commented: 'My son is in his last term at Farlow School. Both he and his older brother have been at Farlow all their school years so far and have been extremely happy and well educated there. I feel we are very fortunate to have such an excellent primary school in the village.' Staff want the best for each child and, through working closely with families, strive to achieve this goal. Although standards vary significantly from year to year due to very small cohorts, current standards at Year 6 are above average. However, the school is aware of the need to further improve standards in mathematics across the school because pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills are not as strong as they should be. Provision for the youngest children is good overall although there are currently insufficient opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop their independent learning skills by accessing the outdoor curriculum. Arrangements for the evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good. Consequently, the quality of teaching in lessons is good and, at times, better.

Because excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support, pupils' personal development has many strengths. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and of the need for healthy lifestyles. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and pupils agree enthusiastically. This is clearly reflected in the high levels of attendance. Behaviour is excellent and a credit to the pupils and the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The curriculum ensures that pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and experiences through weekly visits to the 'Forest School', residential stays with another local small school and regular visitors to school. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are able to learn and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in mathematics by devising strategies to improve pupils'

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calculation and problem-solving skills.

- Develop children's independent learning skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage by improving resources to enable regular, child-initiated access for the outdoor curriculum.

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

Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year but is generally below that typically found. The very small cohorts and the high mobility of pupils makes comparisons between key stages and year groups less meaningful than in larger schools. Although standards achieved in the most recent national tests were below average at Year 6, school data and pupils' work seen during the inspection confirms in the current Year 6 cohort, standards are above average. The school's data demonstrates clearly that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in their time in the school and achieve well. Pupils are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace, without the need for constant adult-intervention. The school is aware, however, of the need to improve standards in mathematics by developing and strengthening pupils' calculation skills and their knowledge of the range of strategies they can use when solving mathematical word problems.

Pupils' behaviour in and out of the classroom is excellent. They behave very considerately towards each other and respond quickly to any guidance from staff about how to conduct themselves. Pupils all say they enjoy coming to school and one pupil, when asked what he liked about the school paused for a while and then said: 'It's just fun!' This enjoyment is fully reflected in the high levels of attendance. Pupils understand what constitutes an unsafe situation and talk about how they are learning to take 'sensible risks' when they work in the 'Forest School'. They are confident that issues they raise will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the school. Pupils understand the main threats to their health and how they can be avoided. They willingly take on responsibility, play a constructive role in the school and, through the school council, influence decisions about school life. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' average standards and their good social skills prepare them well for the future. Pupils' have good awareness, appreciation and respect for differences and their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and religious diversity in Britain is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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?

Teachers have strong subject knowledge which enthuses and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress. All lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and adults and there is a very positive atmosphere for learning across the school. Particularly good use is made of resources, including new technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning. Support by teaching assistants is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning in most lessons. As a result of the school's good assessment procedures teachers plan well to meet the needs of the very wide range of ages and abilities of pupils in each class. However, the school is currently reviewing the teaching of mathematics in order to improve pupils' calculation and problem-solving skills. Teachers and teaching assistants listen to, observe and question groups of pupils well during lessons in order to improve learning. Marking is up to date and, in the best cases, provides pupils with clear guidance about how well they have done and what they could do to improve.

The curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet the needs of different ages and ability groups. The emphasis is firmly on developing pupils' skills, but in such a way as to promote enjoyment and enthusiastic participation. The weekly activities in the school's nearby 'Forest School' facilities are particularly appreciated by the pupils and older pupils are excitedly looking forward to spending a night in the 'Forest School' under the shelters they are currently designing and constructing in their design and technology lessons. The curriculum is further enhanced by French lessons and a strong focus on music across the school. Extra-curricular enrichment opportunities are varied and are much enjoyed by pupils. Pupils receive a good variety of exciting activities and

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experiences through visits, residential stays and visitors to school. The school's outstanding arrangements for the care of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities contribute significantly to their excellent personal development and well-being and support their learning very well.

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?

The headteacher provides strong leadership for a very well-motivated and talented staff team who demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility and commitment to continuing to improve provision. The result of this is clearly evident in the improvements made since the last inspection. The headteacher has identified and successfully tackled areas requiring improvement and, as a result, most aspects of the school are now good or better. The governing body is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school and is becoming more involved in evaluating its work. As a result of regular monitoring and support, teaching is good across the school.

The school's very positive relationship with parents and carers and its good links with a wide range of partners contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' achievement and well-being. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in all the school's work. As a result, the school is a happy, harmonious community in which to work and learn. The small size of the school ensures that all pupils and families are known very well by staff. Through rigorous analysis of the school's regular and accurate data on pupils' progress, staff are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and are proactive in devising initiatives to overcome any weaknesses. School leaders and governors have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and the school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils across all areas of its work. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and the local community very effectively. The well developed community cohesion plan effectively addresses the need to further develop links with, and pupils' first hand knowledge of, those living in contexts which are different to their own in the United Kingdom and overseas.

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Although there are significant variations from year to year due to the very small cohorts, when they join the Reception, most children's skills are below those typically found, particularly in communication and language skills. Many need considerable help to ensure that they learn how to be independent and work and play together. Children make good progress because teaching and learning are good overall. Happy and caring relationships are established and children settle quickly. Children behave well and are enthusiastic in all that they do. They clearly enjoy school and play happily together and individually. Staff have worked hard and successfully to achieve a very strong partnership with parents and carers. Pastoral care and welfare arrangements are effective and help the children to be safe, well cared for and aware of how to be healthy. Adults provide a wide range of interesting learning activities, in the best cases allowing children to work on things that they choose themselves as well as by taking part in more formal group-work activities with adults. However, opportunities for children to explore their learning independently in the outdoor area are currently limited by available space and resources and this hampers the development of their independent learning skills. There is a very good focus on helping children with their speaking skills and ensuring that they develop an ability to work with others in a friendly and purposeful way. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly, well-supported and integrated well into all activities. Older children set excellent examples for behaviour and kindness so that children soon learn classroom routines and how to help get out resources and tidy them away. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Adults have a good knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements of very young children and use national guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage well to support children's learning. The class teacher and support staff carefully observe and record children's achievements on a day-to-day basis and use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are extremely satisfied with the school. This is an exceptional response reflecting the school's outstanding links and levels of engagement with parents and carers. Everyone strongly agreed that they are happy with their children's experience at the school and all either strongly agreed or agreed with all other statements. Namely that their children enjoy school, the teaching is good, the school is well led and managed effectively and the school makes sure that their children are well prepared for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Farlow CofE Primary 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 inspector received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 33 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	88	2	12	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)	14	82	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	82	2	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	100	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



6 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Farlow CofE Primary School, Kidderminster, DY14 0RQ

Thank you so much for helping me when I came to inspect your school recently. I enjoyed meeting so many of you and observing you at work and at play. You made me feel very welcome and made my short visit very enjoyable. Together with your parents, you think Farlow is a good school. I agree with you.

You clearly enjoy learning and taking part in many activities. I was particularly impressed with the Forest School and the work you do there. You make good progress and achieve average standards. Your behaviour is excellent; you have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and you feel safe and secure in school. Your attendance is excellent and you told us that you really enjoy school and are proud to attend. It was good to hear from the school councillors about how you are helping to improve the school.

Teachers work hard to help you to learn and to make sure you enjoy being at school. All the adults in school take excellent care of you. Your school is well led and managed and is continually improving but, to help you to make even better progress, we have asked the school to do two things. These are:

- make better use of the outdoor area to provide more activities for the youngest children to choose from
- find ways to help you improve your calculation and problem-solving strategies so that your work in mathematics improves.

Do continue to work hard and attend regularly. I wish you all the very best.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis

Lead inspector

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