

Farnborough Road Infant School

Farnborough Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 3DF

Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her staff have created a caring learning environment where pupils feel safe. They successfully promote pupils' outstanding personal development and welfare
- Senior leaders and governors understand the current needs of the school and have taken effective action to produce good and improving progress among pupils.
- There is a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- A large majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school and say that staff care for their children well.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Because of this, pupils make strong progress in most classes and subjects.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and thoughtful.
- Senior leaders have worked effectively with parents to reduce previous pockets of low attendance and high persistent absence.
- In the early years, staff look after children well and ensure that they make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers do not consistently provide work for the most able that challenges them. This is particularly true in mathematics, where there are limited chances to apply their reasoning skills.
- Governors are sometimes unclear about the impact of senior leaders' action on pupils' achievement.
- Subject leaders do not precisely evaluate the findings of their checks on teaching and learning.
- Sometimes, teaching assistants in the early years miss opportunities to interact with children to deepen their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that governors have a clearer understanding of the impact of senior leaders' actions on the achievement of pupils.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders so that they can precisely evaluate the findings from their checks on the quality of provision in their subject to secure continuous improvements in teaching and learning.
- Strengthen the skills of teaching assistants in the early years by sharing the examples of highly effective practice that already exist in the setting.
- Ensure that the most able pupils make more rapid progress by:
 - more consistently giving them tasks that stretch them and deepen their understanding
 - making sure they are given more opportunities to use their reasoning skills in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and her staff team have created a warm and positive learning environment where pupils feel safe and happy. Parents find staff approachable and say that they care for their children very well, especially those who have particular needs. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils develop well and make strong progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are ambitious for pupils to achieve well and they constantly look for ways to strengthen and improve the quality of education the school provides. They have recognised that recently published assessment information was disappointing and they have devised actions to address the issues it raised. For example, leaders enlisted the help of an external consultant in mathematics to support improvement in this subject. As a result, teachers now plan lessons more effectively, which has produced good progress for the large majority of pupils.
- The subject leaders for mathematics and English are knowledgeable and understand the priorities for their subjects well. They analyse assessment information effectively and have a good grasp of current standards in school. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning, through activities such as observations in lessons and looking at workbooks. However, they are still developing a more precise analysis of what they find out from these checks, so that they can improve teaching further and help pupils make even faster progress.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are developing their roles well. The headteacher and senior leaders have provided training and guidance to increase their effectiveness. Consequently they now understand the requirements of their subjects well and have begun to make checks on the quality of provision through, for example, lesson observations. However, they do not feed back their findings clearly enough to teachers in order to produce maximum progress for pupils.
- The headteacher has made the systems for managing the performance of staff more rigorous since she took over the role in September 2015. All staff, including teaching assistants, receive targets that relate to pupil's progress and to key features of the school's improvement plan. Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and feed back strengths and aspects to improve. They check that staff have carried out their recommendations and they provide training to help them to achieve their targets. Staff appreciate the programme of training and find it helpful in their professional development. The systems are effective, as teaching is good and improving and pupils across almost all classes and subjects make good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and aims to produce well-rounded pupils who are resilient and have skills for life. It contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As well as experiencing the full range of national curriculum subjects, pupils benefit from lessons in religious education and personal, social and health education. Leaders plan events such as regular visits to a nearby farm and a programme of assemblies to enhance pupils' development. As a result, they prepare pupils effectively for life in modern Britain, promoting fundamental British values well,

such as tolerance of other faiths and beliefs. They also encourage pupils to think about the wider world through regularly raising funds for various charities. Furthermore, they provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as football, craft and cheerleading, which contribute well to pupils' spiritual and social development.

- Senior leaders make good use of pupil premium funding. They use the money to provide support for pupils who need to improve their English and mathematics skills, which has resulted in good progress among current pupils. They also use it to pay for strategies to improve low attendance for this group, such as buying the services of an education welfare officer to follow up frequent absences. This has proved to be successful, as attendance has improved and persistent absence reduced to near the national average.
- School leaders make effective use of the physical education and sport premium for primary schools. They give pupils opportunities to take part in activities such as street dance and lacrosse and they provide training for staff that improves their own teaching knowledge and skills. As a result, pupils are taking part in activities outside physical education lessons in increasing numbers.
- Leaders make effective use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inclusion manager has detailed knowledge of the needs of pupils and oversees the provision of a range of support, including the targeted use of teaching assistants and interventions that help pupils to improve their skills in English and mathematics. Consequently, current pupils make strong progress.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. Leaders have been keen to have regular external evaluation of their work beyond the standard offer. They have, therefore, bought in the services of an adviser who visits every term and has a clear view of the school's priorities.
- Parents who spoke with the lead inspector or who responded to the online survey were overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They find senior leaders and other staff approachable and feel their children make good progress. Their children are safe in school and staff care for them well. They use words like 'exemplary' to describe how staff manage parental concerns and they say that they receive plenty of information about how their child is progressing.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear and honest view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are fully aware of the actions that leaders have taken to address issues raised by recently published assessment information, although they are a little unclear about the full impact of those actions. Governors are ambitious for the school and regard the key stage 1 test results in 2016 as an aberration. They are determined to re-establish consistently strong achievement for their pupils.
- Governors receive appropriate training and have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Governors provide a predominantly good degree of support and challenge to leaders. Minutes of meetings record that they ask questions about relevant matters, such as the recent improvement in the proportion of children achieving a good level of

development at the end of the Reception Year. However, records do not show a deeper level of probing that would indicate highly effective systems for holding senior leaders to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school operates an electronic system for recording safeguarding incidents and concerns and this shows that leaders act promptly, following up concerns with external agencies and making timely referrals when required.
- Staff have a strong awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse, and know the procedures for reporting concerns well. They receive regular training to update their knowledge.
- The school's systems for making checks on staff and visitors are thorough and meet requirements. Safeguarding in recruiting staff is a high priority, and leaders ensure that candidates for advertised posts have a good understanding of safeguarding issues during their interview and selection procedures.
- There is a safe culture in the school. Staff's knowledge of safeguarding procedures and their warm relationships with pupils contribute strongly to this. The school premises are secure and there are rigorous checks on visitors. Pupils feel safe in school because staff give them the information they need to stay safe, such as when using the internet. Parents know that their children are safe because there are effective communication channels between them and the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers ask effective questions that establish pupils' knowledge, with some examples that probe further to secure deeper understanding. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 2, the teacher successfully encouraged pupils to think deeply by asking them to explain why certain answers in a code-breaking activity could be wrong.
- Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are good. The large majority of teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work and this helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. These attitudes help most of the current pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics and English.
- Teachers plan lessons well and use their good subject knowledge to think of effective ways to stimulate pupils and sustain their interest. For example, in Year 2 writing, pupils were excited as they successfully learned how to write sentence structures, including statements and questions. This was because the teacher based the learning on a mysterious egg they had 'found' outside, which fired pupils' imaginations.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of work. This is effective in building up pupils' stamina and allows them the chance to apply the knowledge and understanding they acquire. As a result, progress in writing for current pupils is strong.
- Teachers adhere to the school's feedback and marking policy, allowing pupils time to respond to their comments. Pupils are therefore able to learn from their mistakes and

to reflect on the quality of their work. This contributes to the good progress current pupils make.

- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use their writing skills well in other subjects. For instance, in geography, key stage 1 pupils write about different types of weather and what clothing they would need. Although there are some examples of mathematical skills being used in science, such as constructing block charts, these are not evident in other subjects.
- Teachers use other adults to support pupils' learning well. For example, they help pupils to make good behaviour choices on the infrequent occasions when they misbehave. Leaders also deploy teaching assistants effectively to teach intervention activities to help pupils who need to catch up or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their work contributes well to the good progress that these pupils make. However, there are rare occasions when teaching assistants allow pupils to talk over each other without challenging them. This results in pupils losing learning time.
- While teachers plan well for their pupils for the large majority of the time, there are occasions when the work provided does not challenge most-able pupils. This is particularly true in mathematics, where pupils tackle mostly word problems, but not activities designed to encourage them to apply their reasoning skills regularly. This means that there is a little inconsistency in providing opportunities to deepen these pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils have a very secure knowledge of the dangers of the internet because staff regularly provide them with information that helps keep them safe. Pupils are clear about the safety messages they receive from 'Digi-duck' and 'Digi-dog', and can say which online activities present risks.
- Staff teach pupils to beware of strangers and they have established a clear routine in school so that pupils know which visitors they can talk to. Pupils understand the different coloured stickers that visitors wear and know that green stickers mean that they can approach them to speak to them without other adults being present.
- Pupils are happy in school and feel very safe. This is because staff have trained them well to remember the measures that are in place to reduce the risk of danger. They know that the building is secure and that adults need codes to enter. They know that they have to be careful in the car park and that they will be safe if they always wait for an adult and always walk between the green lines.
- Staff encourage pupils to be healthy and to enjoy exercise through various physical activity clubs as part of pupils' membership of the 'Children's University'. They also encourage healthy eating by giving pupils the chance to grow their own vegetables in the school's vegetable garden.
- Teachers promote pupils' strong understanding of fundamental British values through a carefully planned programme of lessons and assemblies. They encourage pupils to

debate topical issues, such as the referendum on leaving the European Union, at a level appropriate to their age. This contributes strongly to their confident attitudes and to developing respect for others' ideas.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school. They are polite and make way for adults they meet, often holding doors open for them. They give trusted visitors a ready smile and greet them warmly. Their conduct when, for example, lining up in the corridor while moving out of their classrooms is mainly very good, although a few pupils show some lack of self-discipline and do not maintain their position in the line.
- Behaviour in class is, in the vast majority of cases, good and pupils show good attitudes to their learning. Teachers demonstrate good behaviour management strategies and pupils mainly respond to adults' instructions. Occasionally pupils show some lack of self-control when, in their excitement to contribute to lessons, they talk over teaching assistants and other pupils. This behaviour sometimes goes unchallenged, which can result in lost learning time.
- Attendance overall is typically close to or above the national average. In recent years, however, absence and persistent absence for certain groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, has been high. School leaders have taken effective action since September 2016 to remedy this position, with the result that absence for these groups is now close to the national average.
- Pupils play well together at breaktimes. Adults supervise them well and make sure that there is plenty of equipment, such as balls and skipping ropes, to keep them engaged and enjoying themselves. Pupils behave very sensibly in the dining hall, obeying the rules about movement around the room and clearing their plates away efficiently.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Across almost classes and in a range of subjects, current pupils make good progress, especially in writing. For example, in Year 2 writing, pupils are developing the complexity of their language and sentence structure well, typically creating sentences such as 'Put on that sun cream so you don't get burnt horribly.'
- Leaders have used their pupil premium funding in a number of ways, including providing support for pupils' development of English and mathematics skills through work with small groups of pupils and individuals. These pupils make good progress from their starting points as a result of these carefully targeted interventions.
- Published assessment information until 2015 showed performance that was typically at or above national averages for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils were only slightly below other pupils nationally and the differences were diminishing.
- The published assessment information for 2016 was a source of disappointment for the school, with a number of groups achieving below national averages in different subjects. However, these results spurred leaders on to take action to secure improvement. They have been effective, as the evidence of current pupils' work and

the school's own assessment information show strong improvement, with proportions of pupils on track to meet the expected standard or higher being close to or better than national percentages.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because staff provide effective support for these pupils, including the deployment of teaching assistants and the provision of extra support sessions.
- Most-able pupils make good progress in English, especially in writing. This is because teachers constantly challenge them to write extended pieces and to be as adventurous in their language and sentence structure as they can. However, they provide less-consistent challenge in mathematics. There is evidence of deep questioning in oral work, which encourages pupils to use their reasoning skills, but this is sometimes not continued into written work. There is good evidence in books that pupils are given the chance to solve problems frequently, but these tend to be only word problems, with fewer examples of pupils being asked to solve, for example, number puzzles.
- Typically, a large proportion of Year 1 pupils reach the appropriate standard in the phonics check. Current pupils are making good progress in phonics and most of them show that they can apply their knowledge to reading and spelling.
- The school develops pupils' reading skills well and provides incentives to read frequently, such as the chance to read to the school's 'reading dog'. Most pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and most-able pupils demonstrate good levels of fluency and comprehension.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader, who is also the deputy headteacher, has a good grasp of the strengths and areas for development for the provision. She has a strong knowledge of the early years foundation stage curriculum and she uses this to ensure that there is accurate tracking of children's progress across the early years.
- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge that are slightly below typical for their age and stage of development. They make good progress in their time in the setting. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been increasing over time and in 2016 it was slightly above the national average for the first time. This means that a good majority of children are ready for Year 1 by the end of their Reception year.
- Leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding to secure good progress for eligible children from their starting points. They also focus on most-able pupil premium children and ensure that they are supported and challenged. They provide, for example, extra sessions with teaching assistants to develop their recognition of more difficult words.
- The teaching of writing and problem solving in mathematics is highly effective. As a result, children make rapid progress in these areas. There is clear evidence of some most-able children in Reception developing skills in writing that are advanced for their age. Teachers also challenge them to use their problem-solving skills successfully in

mathematics, as they can, for instance, answer calculations with missing numbers in them.

- Staff use their good subject knowledge to plan and provide a wide range of activities that interest the majority of children and engage them well. However, sometimes activities are not demanding enough, especially for the most able, when they are working independently of the adults in the setting.
- Teachers and teaching assistants often demonstrate effective questioning skills, encouraging children to solve a simple problem, such as how to prevent water that is flowing down a chute from spilling on the ground, or to use their language skills to communicate clearly. However, there are some occasions when teaching assistants do not grasp opportunities to help children learn, particularly outdoors, choosing instead to watch children without interacting with them.
- Children in the two-year-old provision develop well. Staff care for their needs effectively and develop, for instance, their language skills well, with some children able to communicate using more than one word.
- There is a strong partnership with parents and staff communicate regularly with them. The early years leader makes sure that there are plenty of opportunities for parents and children to become familiar with the setting before their children start. For example, staff carry out visits to family homes and private childcare providers and invite parents in for introductory meetings in school.
- Safeguarding is effective and well managed, as the early years leader is also a deputy safeguarding lead. All members of staff receive regular training and are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures. Children show that feel safe by their good behaviour and the positive relationships that they have with each other and with adults. The setting also complies with all welfare requirements.

School details

Unique reference number	104863
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10032811

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	466
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Strom
Headteacher	Jennifer Taylor
Telephone number	01704 577637
Website	www.farnboroughroadinfants.co.uk
Email address	head.fris@schools.sefton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2010

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Farnborough Road Infant School is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

- The proportion of pupils that leave or join the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year is below the national average.
- The school accommodates a children's centre that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations between the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and inspectors. The headteacher was also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff, the chair and other members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' work in writing and mathematics, as well as their work in other subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector evaluated 52 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Elizabeth Clarke	Ofsted Inspector
Denah Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Fann	Ofsted Inspector

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