

Inspection of a good school: Farndon Primary School

Churton Road, Farndon, Chester, Cheshire CH3 6QP

Inspection dates:

26–27 February 2020

Outcome

Farndon Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend school regularly. They enjoy learning. The pupils that I spoke with told me that they feel safe in school. They know that they can talk to any adult if they have a concern.

Pupils behave well. They told me that discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils are adamant that there is no racist or homophobic bullying. Pupils said that staff act swiftly on the rare occasions that bullying happens.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. This helps to ensure that pupils try their hardest and achieve well in a wide range of subjects. Pupils enjoy playing musical instruments, including keyboards, guitar and violin. They also enjoy learning French.

Pupils are known for their sporting achievements. They excel in cross-country, athletics and swimming. Pupils enjoy netball, football, hockey, arts and crafts, science and 'digital wizards' clubs.

Pupils are active citizens. They raise funds for many worthy causes and local charities. Pupils take their responsibilities as school council members and safety officers seriously. They visit local places of interest such as Beeston Castle and Chester. Pupils enjoy field trips in Farndon. They appreciate art and enjoy visiting galleries and museums. These experiences bring learning to life.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders and governors want Farndon pupils to be upstanding members of their local community. Leaders also want every pupil to enjoy learning, find their strengths and achieve highly. Published data shows that in 2019, Year 6 pupils achieved well in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school's well-planned curriculum helps to ensure that teachers know what pupils need to learn and in what order. This is so that, over time, pupils know and remember more in a wide range of subjects. Most pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Some subject leaders are new. They are still in the process of developing their areas of responsibility. For example, in art, procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do are being refined. In some aspects of history, work to develop pupils' understanding of the order of historical events and periods is not as effective as it could be.

In 2019 the proportion of pupils that attained the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average. Senior leaders' focus and determination to improve the teaching of phonics is paying off. In the early years and key stage 1, staff have created a sense of excitement and urgency about reading and phonics. They are determined that pupils will gain the phonics skills that they need to become confident and competent readers. The pupils that I heard read used their phonics skills exceptionally well to sound out and read difficult words.

Pupils read with expression. They can retell what they have read in their own words. This is because, as well as reading for pleasure, they practise finding information from different kinds of texts.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit from a well-planned and creative curriculum. They have strong calculation skills, love books and are highly communicative and cooperative. Children also have good comprehension, speaking and listening skills. Their exemplary behaviour supports their learning well. This was observed during story time, as children discussed the characters in a story and talked to each other about their favourite nursery rhymes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well catered for by well-trained and caring staff. Pupils with SEND flourish in class because staff make learning interesting. In addition, staff have the same high expectations of pupils with SEND as they have of other pupils. This helps to ensure that these pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They consolidate their knowledge and skills as they progress through the curriculum.

Pupils behave very well in class. They like to be challenged and engage fully in their learning. The school's curriculum extends beyond developing pupils academically. Pupils enjoy undertaking roles that develop their leadership skills. For example, the Farndon News Crew produces and edits the school magazine. In addition, pupils recently organised a cake sale to raise money to help animals rescued from the bushfires in Australia.

Staff feel valued. Their morale is high. Those I spoke with told me that leaders are mindful of their workload, well-being and mental health. Staff appreciate flexible arrangements for planning. They appreciate the training available to them, which helps to improve their teaching.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders leave nothing to chance when it comes to safeguarding. Staff are trained to spot signs of neglect and abuse. They know exactly what to do if they have a worry about the welfare of a pupil. Designated safeguarding leaders have highly efficient systems in place to record any concerns. Staff work closely with a wide range of outside support agencies to ensure that pupils at risk of harm are promptly given the help that they need.

Teachers help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Comprehensive curriculum plans, which carefully sequence learning, are now in place for all subjects. However, some subject leaders do not identify sufficient opportunities for pupils to revisit important learning. On occasions, some teachers do not use their assessments of where pupils are in their learning to help them know and remember more. Leaders must ensure that teachers identify the most important knowledge that pupils need to know and address any misconceptions.
- Outcomes in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 have been very low for the last two years. Leaders need to ensure that the recent improvements are fully embedded so that a much higher proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 1.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 22–23 November 2010.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111107
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10122070
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lindsey Lancelotte
Headteacher	Andrew Walker
Website	www.farndon.cheshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Several staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including four teachers, one of whom is a newly qualified.
- The governing body has been reorganised. Several new members have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has been completely remodelled. In 2018 a new building was erected. It contains four classes for pupils in key stage 2, additional classrooms and food technology facilities. The building for children in the early years and key stage 1 pupils has been refurbished.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and leaders responsible for the curriculum.
- I met with staff responsible for safeguarding and pupils' welfare.

- I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner, who is a headteacher from a local school.
- I took account of the 79 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered the 23 responses to the Ofsted staff survey. I reviewed the 10 responses to the Ofsted pupil survey.
- I considered the school's curriculum. I scrutinised the school's approach to the teaching of reading, history and art. For each subject, I met with the subject leaders and teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. I also listened to pupils read.
- I met with pupils, leaders and staff to talk about pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safety. I scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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