

South Farnborough Junior School

Cunnington Road, Farnborough, Hants, GU14 6PL

Inspection dates

30 September–1 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- South Farnborough Junior School's high-quality education is a testament to the outstanding leadership of its headteacher. She receives excellent support from senior and middle leaders, governors and the whole staff.
- This is a school that is continually seeking ways to improve in order that all its pupils can do their very best. All aspects of the school's work are constantly and rigorously checked. As a result, emerging weaknesses are speedily identified and successfully addressed.
- The school has made excellent progress since its previous inspection and is exceptionally well placed to maintain and build on its strengths.
- Monitoring and support for teaching quality by both leaders and governors is excellent. Especially well-tailored programmes to enhance teachers' skills have ensured they become excellent practitioners. Staff new to the profession or to the school are exceptionally well supported.
- Throughout the school, teaching is outstanding. Staff are exceptionally good at setting challenging tasks that help all pupils, whatever their needs or talents, to make excellent progress.
- The outstanding curriculum promotes pupils' academic and personal development exceptionally well. Pupils' commitment to learning is supported especially well through the interesting and highly motivating programmes of work.
- Pupils' achievement is excellent. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is consistently above average. Inspectors observed above average skills in other subjects such as computing.
- The achievement of pupils who could be at risk of falling behind, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is excellent.
- Highly effective specialist support ensures pupils in the resource provision consistently achieve as well as they can. Where achievable, some reach average attainment levels and occasionally exceed them.
- Excellent support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.
- Staff and governors maintain a very strong focus on procedures for keeping pupils safe. Outstanding relationships between pupils and with adults make the school a very happy and safe place to be.
- The school has an excellent working relationship with other schools and agencies. The outstanding partnership with parents ensures pupils are very well supported with homework activities.
- Governors are very well informed, especially about pupils' achievement. Their work in holding leaders and staff to account for the impact they have on pupils' progress is excellent. The allocation of additional funding is outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- All teachers were observed teaching. Some of these observations were with the headteacher.
- Inspectors made a number of other short visits to group or individual activities to help pupils who have fallen behind to catch up. They observed the work of pupils in Middle School (the resource provision).
- Inspectors heard a sample of pupils read, scrutinised a sample of pupils' written work and observed some extra-curricular activities.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff, including senior and middle managers. A conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the school's parent survey and conversations with a small number of parents bringing their children to school.
- Responses from the 18 staff questionnaires were analysed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents including the school's records on current pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to planning and monitoring, and safeguarding, were also looked at.

Inspection team

Diane Wilkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tessa Care

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- South Farnborough is an above-average-sized junior school. It has increased in size since the previous inspection. At the time of the inspection, there were three classes in each of Years 3, 4 and 5, and two in Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported by school action is broadly average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school hosts a special resource provision (known as Middle School) for 18 disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Since the previous inspection, the provision has changed to admit pupils with complex learning and behavioural needs. This was also inspected.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding known as the pupil premium is below average. This funding is to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- South Farnborough Junior is a lead school for School Direct. Through this, in conjunction with a local university, it provides teacher training. Leaders also work closely with colleagues in other local schools in joint monitoring and development work.
- The school meets government floor standards in English and mathematics, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strategies in place to increase the range of vocabulary that the younger, lower-attaining pupils use in their writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's excellent support for pupils and staff is evident in the outstanding way in which she helps them to do their best. In return, they show total commitment to the school. All who work there and governors continually strive to ensure that the quality of education and pupils' learning are as good as they can be.
- To support this work, there are excellent systems in place for checking how well the school is doing. The very regular collection and analysis of teaching quality and pupils' progress is backed up by a culture that takes every opportunity to explore how things can be done better. This was clear from the meetings inspectors held with staff during the inspection. At this school, the drive for improvement never stands still.
- Improvement planning is very effective. It correctly prioritises the most important things for the school to tackle, for example recent curriculum and assessment changes. Also, alongside this, there is a constant monitoring of the things that are going really well so that the quality does not lapse.
- The monitoring and support of teaching by senior and subject leaders is excellent. It helps to provide a consistent approach in important aspects such as behaviour management and the teaching of calculation skills. Alongside this, there is a strong culture of sharing best practice and coaching each other in excellence. These strengths underpin performance management arrangements which are excellent. Both whole-school and individual targets expect excellence and also provide high-quality support to help staff achieve them.
- The safeguarding of pupils is given high priority, especially in the vetting and training of staff, and in child protection procedures. Pupils and their parents are rightly confident that pupils are very well cared for.
- The curriculum fully complies with recent guidance and provides a range of very rich and interesting activities. It gives excellent support for pupils' academic and personal development. For example, the new arrangements for developing computing skills are already promoting high attainment levels.
- Very-well-thought-out programmes for religious education help promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially well. There is an excellent range of visits and after-school clubs which enhance pupils' learning and well-being considerably.
- The school makes excellent use of a wide range of partnership to enhance pupils' education and welfare, including for those who attend the Middle School. Although the local authority rightly considers the school needs little external support, staff capitalise especially well on that available. For example, a thorough review is being undertaken with support of local authority officers on the changing needs of Middle School.
- Leaders take part in joint working with local schools that benefits South Farnborough Junior pupils and those in other schools also. The strong support for teaching quality has been acknowledged in the school's identification as a lead school for teacher training.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is outstanding and governors fulfil their statutory duties exceptionally well. Governors are very well informed about all aspects of the school's work.
 - Their monitoring is exemplary and governors are strongly committed to increasing their expertise, often commissioning their own training.
 - Partly gained through their first-hand monitoring, governors have an excellent awareness of teaching quality. This, together with the excellent information provided from formal performance management outcomes, ensures governors are very well placed to reward only high-quality teaching or leadership.
 - Governors' knowledge and use of national and school progress data to check pupils' progress is excellent. This helps governors to work with the school in addressing any weaknesses as well as making sure excellence is maintained.
 - Governing body minutes constantly refer to the very challenging questions governors ask of staff. These are followed up rigorously if evidence needs to be collected. Alongside this, governors make a strong commitment to supporting the school. For example, they are very skilled at ensuring pupils and staff are safe and free from harm.
 - The continual search for the best way of doing things leads to excellent allocation and monitoring of additional funding. Mainly used to ensure outstanding teaching in catch-up activities, this funding has an excellent impact on pupils' achievement. The use of the sports grant to increase pupils' participation in a range of sports and provide expert teaching, including from school staff, is very successful.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- This plays a major role in promoting pupils' academic and personal development. In mainstream classes, lessons are never disrupted. Behaviour around the school, in assemblies, at playtimes and in after-school clubs is excellent.
- The behaviour of pupils who find maintaining good behaviour difficult is managed very well by staff. This is most notable in Middle School where the skill of the leader and support assistants is excellent. Records of incidents indicate most pupils' behaviour improves very well over time.
- Pupils themselves make a major contribution to the caring and supportive ethos of the school. They are unfailingly polite and helpful. For example, one Middle School pupil was very concerned and supportive when a pupil he was working with found it difficult to contribute.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They very much enjoy school and work exceptionally hard. Attendance is consistently above average and very few pupils are poor attenders.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- This is strongly underpinned by the school's determination to prevent discrimination and foster good relationships. There have been no bullying or racist incidents reported for a number of years. Pupils are adamant that such incidents do not happen.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of their rights, and of their responsibilities towards others. They develop an excellent understanding of British values.
- Pupils show great respect for different beliefs, customs or ways of life. Strongly supported by the school's excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, relationships throughout the school are outstanding. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in a diverse British society.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of how to keep safe. They recognise the hazards of using the internet and how to avoid them. In this aspect, parents are also very well informed by staff to help secure their children's safety at home.

The quality of teaching**is outstanding**

- From the time staff start at the school, senior and middle leaders provide excellent support. As a result, teachers develop into excellent practitioners who deliver outstanding teaching and learning.
- Staff have very high expectations of pupils and there is an excellent ethos for learning so that new pupils quickly recognise that doing anything but your very best is not acceptable. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves and are very committed to improving their work.
- Lessons are always well planned and subsequently the effect they have had on learning is very well evaluated by staff. As a result, future learning consistently helps pupils to extend their knowledge and skills.
- Monitoring of progress throughout lessons is excellent. Staff appear to know intuitively when a group or individual needs help or is learning quickly. Pupils themselves are taught ways in which to seek advice either by using resources or asking other pupils, if adults are engaged elsewhere. Consequently, they become excellent learners, well capable of tackling new things with the minimum of support.
- In all classes, marking of recorded work is exemplary. It consistently provides very good advice on how to improve, even setting out examples of how things can be done when necessary. This is clear evidence of the staff's outstanding commitment to ensuring pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils always respond to marking exceptionally well, taking great care to check advice before going on to new work. As a result, they rarely make a mistake twice, having the confidence to ask for extra help if they do not understand.
- Learning support assistants make a major contribution to pupils' progress. During the inspection, it was clear that they were constantly looking out for who might need extra help throughout a lesson. When working with a specific group, their guidance is very good. They also provide excellent support for behaviour management on the very few occasions this is necessary.
- The advice and support of outstanding subject practitioners in the school helps ensure that staff expertise is excellent. In all lessons observed during the inspection, both teachers and assistants were very effective at explaining new learning. They led excellent discussions and asked very pertinent questions to help pupils understand.

- Teaching during the special activities to help pupils at risk of falling behind to catch up is outstanding. Additional funding is used to especially good effect to ensure this is the case.
- Computer technology is used to excellent effect both by staff and pupils themselves to enhance learning. In this aspect, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for secondary school.
- Parents are very well informed about their children's progress and the learning they need to cover in each year group. The work pupils do at home supports their learning in school exceptionally well. For example, pupils are very well prepared for working on a new topic by having already researched the information they need for this at home.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Partly due to the increase in numbers on roll and change in the nature of the disabilities, learning and behavioural needs of pupils in the Middle School, attainment on entry has declined since the previous inspection. It is now slightly below average.
- Staff and governors have been exceptionally good at adjusting the quality of education to allow for this. There is an outstanding awareness of individual pupils' needs among all who are responsible for supporting their progress. As a result, progress has improved, attainment has risen and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is excellent. Pupils are especially well prepared for their future education.
- Identifying a weakness in phonic skills (the sounds letters make in words) in some pupils when they start in Year 3, leaders put in place an excellent programme to improve these. This has had a marked effect on reading skills so that by the end of Year 3 virtually all pupils read at least at the level expected for this age.
- By Year 6, pupils are very confident readers. They read widely and often, talking enthusiastically about the books they choose. Having been taught comprehension skills very effectively, they are skilled at analysing non-fiction texts or website information for facts to support their learning in other subjects.
- In writing, younger pupils benefit considerably from their increased awareness of letter sounds to spell correctly. A strong emphasis on grammar has ensured that sentence structure, use of tense and punctuation are accurate by Year 4. A current priority is improving the range of vocabulary the less-able, younger pupils use in their writing, which is limited.
- By Year 6, pupils are skilled at writing well in a range of different formats. This was notable in the balanced arguments they set out as to whether Farnborough needed its own leisure pool. Pupils' use of language in stories is highly effective; for example in creating a 'spooky atmosphere' in the opening paragraph.
- Skilful teaching helps pupils to use their writing skills to very good effect in other subjects. For example, in science, their reports of investigations are very well recorded. Likewise, in history, the imaginative stories of 'My Day in the Stone Age' were very well researched and written.
- In mathematics, the strong drive to ensure pupils really understand how to calculate has paid dividends in the way that pupils readily solve complex problems. Year 6 pupils' skills in measuring and using data to support their work in other subjects such as science is excellent.
- Pupils' also attain above the levels expected for their age in other subjects. During the inspection, the book trailers pupils designed on their tablet computers using graphics, sound, text and action showed excellent computing skills. In gymnastics, Year 5 pupils planned and performed high-quality floor routines.
- The most-able pupils are consistently stretched to do their very best. They attain highly. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in national tests is rising well.
- The school's strong commitment to promoting equality of opportunity ensures that all pupils achieve exceptionally well. This is especially evident in the progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including pupils attending Middle School. Those able to reach or exceed the levels expected for their age do so. For others with significant needs, the small progress steps they make demonstrates excellent achievement.
- The achievement of pupils from minority backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve as well as their peers.
- Excellent strategies to support their learning ensure that the achievement of pupils in receipt of additional funding is excellent. They have closed the gap on their peers nationally in both English and mathematics, although they are a little way behind their peers in this school.

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	116155
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	448783

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve White
Headteacher	Lynne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 March 2010
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