

# South Farnham School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	136888
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	385893
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Natalia Power

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	745
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Linda Ross
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Carter OBE
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Menin Way Farnham Surrey GU9 8DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 716 155
<b>Fax number</b>	01252 718 260
<b>Email address</b>	info@south-farnham.surrey.sch.uk

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Natalia Power	Additional inspector
Colin Lower	Additional inspector
Raymond Prentice	Additional inspector
Gail Robertson	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 46 lessons or part lessons, observing all 23 class teachers as well as other teachers and support teachers. The inspectors conducted scrutinies of pupils' work, spoke to parents and carers, listened to pupils read, and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at its self-evaluation documents and plans for improvement, the data collected on pupils' progress, safeguarding information and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. They received and analysed 302 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This school is much larger than average in size. It occupies two sites about a mile apart. Pupils from Reception to Year 2 are located at an infant school site, which currently has two forms of entry, apart from Year 2 which has a third class. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are located at a junior site, which currently has four forms of entry. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils come from White British heritages. An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school gained academy status in July 2011 and was among the first 100 schools in the country to be designated a Teaching School with a role to promote, among other responsibilities, the training and professional development of teachers, support staff and future leaders.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The parent who commented, 'I cannot speak highly enough about the staff, pupils and leadership within this school,' summed up the views of the vast majority of parents and carers. Inspectors, too, found the school remarkable. Everyone is expected to succeed and each individual, whether child or adult, does his or her utmost to rise to the high expectations.
- Pupils do exceptionally well, year after year, in the tests taken at the end of Year 6. All groups make outstanding progress. The school is one of the very top in the country for adding value, ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Most of the teaching is outstanding, and none is less than good. Pupils are given a rich and exciting programme of activities and tasks, matched accurately to their needs. Those at risk of falling behind have their needs identified from an early age and are taught English and mathematics by skilled teachers. This ensures that all groups achieve exceptionally well.
- Marking is generally consistent across the school, but there are occasional instances, particularly in mathematics, where the marking does not always advise pupils on what next steps they need to take to improve.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable and they are eager to learn. They are kept extremely safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher is inspirational, including in his leadership of teaching. Through long and dedicated service, he has made the school one of the top schools in the country. His management of the performance, not just of the teachers but also of support staff, is second to none, and has resulted in a like-minded team who share his determination to continue to secure improvements.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all marking, particularly in mathematics, matches the quality of the best and provides clear advice to pupils on what they need to do to improve.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children begin the Reception year with language and number skills which vary, but which are generally above average. They get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make outstanding progress in their learning. From Years 1 to 6 the momentum continues, and, through consistently high-quality teaching and a stimulating curriculum, pupils continue to make exceptional progress. As a result, all the pupils leave school with attainment in English and mathematics which is considerably above average.

Inspectors found, through talking to the pupils, looking at their exercise books and observing how they learn in the classroom, that the quality of their learning is second to none. No pupil or group of pupils is overlooked. Boys and girls achieve equally, as do all other groups of pupils. The focus groups, which provide high-quality English and mathematics teaching to those who might otherwise struggle, are impressive. Pupils in these groups receive exactly the same curriculum as their peers and are expected to do just as well; the only difference is that the smaller classes enable pupils to have more focused support. As a result, the attainment of disabled pupils and those identified as having special educational needs is far ahead of pupils with similar needs in the country as a whole.

It is no wonder that pupils have such a love of learning when tasks are so stimulating and challenging as those observed by inspectors. For example, Year 4 pupils were enthralled by the task of identifying creatures found in a pond-dipping session in the school grounds. Year 2 pupils were busily engaged filling receptacles with water and measuring the contents. In both cases they learned exceptionally well, because the teachers encouraged them to make predictions about what they would find and to discuss their findings with their classmates.

Reading is an important aspect of the school's work, and firm foundations are established from the earliest years. Reception children are divided into nine ability groups to learn their sounds and letters (phonics), and the close attention each group receives ensures that they make excellent progress in learning to read. By Year 2 pupils are highly skilled at reading, and over half of them gain the highest Level 3 in their reading tests. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their reading skills are over a year ahead of their peers in the country as a whole.

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## Quality of teaching

An important reason why pupils do so well at the school is that teachers have such high expectations of them, and the pupils are keen to rise to the challenge. Disabled pupils and those identified as having special educational needs do particularly well, because the quality of the teaching in their focus groups, some taken by assistant headteachers, is so high. All pupils in the school benefit from consistently outstanding teaching. For example, a Year 6 mathematics lesson fully engaged the pupils who all acted as 'internal verifiers', checking the accuracy of one another's answers. A Year 4 English lesson included a sophisticated debate about whether a zoo should close or remain open. In this lesson, a pupil walked along 'conscience alley' between groups of his classmates who all tried to convince him of the rightness of their arguments for and against the zoo. The pupil then gave his verdict and explained his reasons to the rest of the class. This lesson was just one example of how effectively teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In one Year 5 English lesson pupils were actively engaged in checking one another's work to ensure that they had included such aspects as correct punctuation and an interesting vocabulary. As a result of such stimulating teaching, carefully matched to their needs and capabilities, all pupils learn exceptionally well and make outstanding progress.

Most of the marking offers valuable guidance to pupils. Comments are both supportive and encouraging, while still making it clear to pupils how they can continue to improve. Occasionally, particularly in mathematics, some marking, while remaining encouraging, does not make clear to pupils what next steps they need to take to improve.

The comment of one parent that, 'The quality of the teaching is of a very high standard and pupils are constantly stretched and challenged in order to achieve their targets,' sums up the views of most parents and carers. These views are endorsed by the inspectors.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils told the inspectors that outstanding behaviour seen in and around the school was typical. They reported that there was no actual bullying, such as racial or cyber-bullying, but that very occasionally there was a little name-calling or pushing. These incidents were dealt with quickly by the adults and did not recur. Pupils reported that they were taught how to deal with dangers from the internet or from strangers, and told inspectors that they felt very safe in school. Nearly all parents and carers reported that their children are safe at the school and hardly any who spoke to inspectors or returned questionnaires felt that there was any bullying at the school.

Pupils show their enjoyment of school through their above-average attendance. Their extremely thoughtful behaviour and consideration for others spring from the strength of the school's provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils showed their respect for one another by their

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attentive and enthusiastic response to a Year 6 assembly in which the pupils brought history to life through a dramatic performance of the highest calibre.

## **Leadership and management**

Governors describe the headteacher as 'visionary'. It is through his vision, shared by the capable deputy headteacher and all senior managers, that the school has gone from strength to strength in the 24 years in which he has been at the helm. The long-established leadership team are not content to rest on their laurels, and the school continues to be at the forefront of development. For example, the way the headteacher and his team have managed the extension of the pupils' age-range to incorporate pupils from a former infant school has been exemplary. In a very short space of time they have identified ways of improving provision for the younger children and have brought about rapid improvements, not just to the fabric of the school, but also to the quality of the teaching. Under the headteacher's inspired leadership the school has become a Teaching School, sharing expertise to promote excellence in other schools. The staff share his vision, and are equally ambitious to contribute to the school's success. Governors are fully committed to the school and make an outstanding contribution to its work. Consequently the school is exceptionally well placed to continue building on its success.

Performance management is outstanding. Leaders and managers secure consistently excellent performance from teachers and support staff alike. The impact of the outstanding professional development is seen, for example, in the way many teaching assistants go on to become teachers themselves, and all are highly trained and qualified. Teachers' performance is monitored extremely effectively to ensure that the high quality is maintained consistently, and this ensures that all pupils achieve highly. No group falls behind, and all pupils, whatever their backgrounds or needs, make outstanding progress. The school's outstanding promotion of equality is seen in the way the adults and pupils value and respect one another, so that there is no discrimination on any grounds.

Leaders, managers and the governing body ensure that the arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. The premises are securely protected. Statutory requirements concerning safeguarding are met. Staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures and all adults are thoroughly checked and vetted before working at the school.

The curriculum is second to none in the opportunities it offers the pupils to learn, explore and develop their talents. While the key skills of literacy and numeracy are at the heart of the curriculum, there are exceptional opportunities for pupils to develop their talents in such fields as music, art, drama and sport. These very effectively promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and provide memories that will stay with the pupils for life.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



18 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of South Farnham School, Farnham GU9 8DY**

We very much enjoyed our recent visit to your school, and it was lovely to see how helpful you are, and how you value and respect one another. Thank you for making us welcome and telling us your views, both in person and through your questionnaires.

You are fortunate to go to such an outstanding school, which is a model of how all schools should be. Because your headteacher and all the adults have such faith in you, you try your hardest to do well. As a result you do extremely well in your tests and make outstanding progress.

There is, of course, much more to school than results, important though these are, and we were impressed by how well you behave towards one another. You told us that the excellent behaviour we saw was typical. You also told us how secure you feel at school, and how safe the school keeps you.

We were also impressed by how many opportunities you have to shine in music, drama, sport and so many other ways.

You told us how much you love your school. All of you have a part to play in making it even better. Look carefully at all your teachers' comments on your work, and make sure that you understand how to improve. If you do not understand, tell your teacher, as we have asked them to make sure that you always know exactly what to do next.

It was lovely to see you all together in assembly, enjoying and applauding the performances of your school-friends. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power  
Lead inspector

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