

Finchampstead C of E VA Primary School

The Village, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 4JR

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 2018

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 newly-appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the school. Parents and staff are supportive of the changes she has made since taking up her position.
- Staff work together as a cohesive team. They are enthusiastic about the recent changes to the leadership structure of the school and welcome the resulting benefits this brings.
- Leaders' self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate. As a result, staff are aware of the key priorities for improvement.
- Most pupils make good progress from their different starting points. This is especially the case in the early years and key stage 1.
- Classrooms are happy places. Staff know pupils well. The nurturing ethos and a strong focus on developing pupils' well-being are strengths of the school.
- Governors understand the strategic nature of their role. They have a realistic view of the school's many strengths, as well as the things that need to be better.
- Pupils behave well at Finchampstead. They are kind, welcoming and understanding of the needs of others.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe at school and parents appreciate the care that staff give to their children.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. Staff are skilled at providing them with interesting opportunities to explore and learn, both in and out of the classroom.
- Although subject leaders are increasingly effective in their roles, more needs to be done to share good practice to improve the quality of teaching and learning further.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make inconsistent progress over time in reading and mathematics. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils.
- Although their self-evaluation is accurate, leaders need to sharpen improvement planning to focus more on the progress that pupils make.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rates of progress that pupils make in mathematics and reading, particularly most-able pupils, so that larger proportions achieve a greater depth of learning by the end of key stage 2.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders so that they have more impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in their specific areas of responsibility.
- Refine improvement planning so that leaders, governors and staff focus more keenly on the progress that pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment in January 2018, the headteacher has injected a renewed sense of purpose into the school. Her determined leadership is moving the school forward. She has the support of staff and parents and has a clear vision to improve the school further.
- Staff work as a cohesive team. They are supportive of the changes that the new headteacher has introduced, including a new leadership structure which is impacting positively on how staff work together to improve the quality of education at the school.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is honest and has identified accurately the key areas that need to improve. As a result, staff are more focused on improving their classroom practice and pupils' rates of progress are accelerating. This is particularly the case in key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do well because leaders and governors ensure that the quality of provision for this vulnerable group is good. This is also the case for the school's very few pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The curriculum is fit for purpose and meets the needs of pupils well. A wide range of enrichment activities further enhance the day-to-day curriculum, including educational visits, visitors into the school, clubs and links with the local community. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school because their learning is relevant to them.
- Additional funding for physical education and sport is used effectively. Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they get to take part in team games. Boys in particular were very enthusiastic when talking to the inspector, pointing out the benefits of the school's sporting programme, including the 'daily mile', and how sport was improving their health and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well within the wider curriculum. The school's nurturing ethos underpins this and parents are particularly positive about the benefits that this brings to their children.
- Pupils are taught to be reflective and tolerant about the cultures and beliefs of others. They welcome new pupils openly and are accepting of the differences some pupils have. Inequality is not accepted here. Pupils fully embrace the school's values of respect, resilience, responsibility, resourcefulness and readiness to learn as part of their daily life at school.
- The local authority and diocese have provided the correct balance of support and challenge to the school and its leaders in recent times. The outcomes of this inspection reflect the quality and effectiveness of the guidance given to the headteacher, including the support of a headteacher mentor from another local school.
- Although self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate, improvement planning does not focus sharply enough on the progress that pupils make.

- Subject leaders are increasingly involved in sharing good practice across the school, partly due to recent changes in the leadership structure. However, leaders and governors understand that the impact that subject leaders have on improving the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms is not yet strong enough.

Governance of the school

- Governors are dedicated and aspire for the school to be successful. They carry out their statutory duties diligently and understand that their role is strategic in nature. The governing body's recent success in appointing a new headteacher has ensured that the capacity for the school to improve further is now in place.
- Recent changes to the structure of the governing body, as well as changes in the way that it carries out its functions, are having a positive effect on improving the school. Governors now meet collectively more often, which is enabling them to understand more about the school's priorities for improvement.
- Governors need to focus more acutely on the progress that pupils are making over time, not just test and assessment results at the end of Years 2 and 6. This will enable them to hold school leaders to account for improving the quality of education that the school offers, as well as improving the outcomes of pupils at the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have attended appropriate training and understand their responsibilities well. The culture to keep children safe is strong. Consequently, safeguarding has a high priority and the school is a safe environment for its pupils.
- All parents who spoke to the inspector or replied to Ofsted's online questionnaire were very positive about all aspects of the welfare, health and safety of their children at school. Pupils told the inspector that they feel safe in school and that there is always a member of staff they can talk to if they have worries.
- Systems to check that the school site is safe are well developed. Buildings are maintained to a good standard because of the collective efforts of the whole school community. Routines at the start and finish of the school day are sensible and ensure that pupils are kept safe, while enabling parents to have access to teaching and support staff if required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils enjoy being in the classroom at Finchampstead. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Classroom visits revealed pupils who were keen to share their work and happy to talk about the activities they were working on.
- Staff know pupils well. Support staff are used effectively and contribute much to the process of teaching and learning. This is particularly the case when classes are split into smaller groups for focused work.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well in classrooms. Teaching and support staff understand their needs and plan activities that enable them to become successful learners.
- Staff use a wide range of resources in classrooms to help pupils to understand concepts or engage in practical learning. Subject specialists use their knowledge to good effect in the arts and sport.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in subjects other than mathematics and English because teachers make learning fun. One Year 5 boy talked enthusiastically about his science lessons during breaktime, telling the inspector how he could not wait for the next session to learn more about rust and its effect on the metals used in his experiment. Other pupils told the inspector how they wanted to 'do' geography and history every day because they enjoy learning about things that they 'don't yet know'.
- Teachers use questioning well in classrooms. Pupils in one classroom were challenged to consider the wisdom, or not, of using the words 'rippling' and 'roaring' together in their descriptive writing. This created more discussion, with pupils asking their own questions to extend their understanding and push their learning forward.
- Sometimes, pupils are unclear about what they are learning or why because teachers plan activities that are not closely linked to their original intentions, or that confuse pupils about the real purpose of the activity. When this is the case, pupils lose focus and their learning slows.
- Classroom visits showed that, on occasion, most-able pupils are not challenged enough, and extension work completed by the most able pupils does not consolidate learning as well as it might. Senior and middle leaders are increasingly aware of this. As a result, staff are focusing much more on this issue, and most-able pupils are now beginning to make better progress than was the case in the recent past.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school, telling the inspector that they think the school is a friendly place for them to be.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They are not afraid to offer responses in classrooms, even when they are not sure of the answers. One example of a pupil 'deferring' an answer, and nominating another pupil to answer instead, is testament to the strength of relationships between pupils across the school.
- Older pupils like the extra responsibilities they are given. Additional roles, such as prefects, sports leaders and buddies for younger pupils, are sought after, helping pupils to develop their sense of responsibility, as well as having a positive impact on the sense of community in the school.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They are able to explain very clearly about the potential dangers of using social media or the internet. Older children told the inspector

how they are expected to make their own 'lessons' about staying safe online, and about the regular updates and reminders they receive from staff.

- Most pupils are confident learners, although there were instances during classroom visits when pupils were unsure of what they needed to do next and lacked confidence to ask.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Classrooms are orderly, and corridors and the playground are happy and safe places for pupils to be. Pupils are polite to each other and to visitors.
- Disruptions to learning due to poor behaviour are rare, although pupils said this was not always the case in the recent past. In discussions with a group of pupils, the inspector was told that bullying does not happen at the school, and that 'silliness' is tackled quickly by staff.
- Most pupils attend school well. Leaders have prioritised reducing absence in the last year and intervene appropriately when they have concerns. As a result, levels of absence, particularly persistent absence, have fallen over time and now compare well to other similar schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Most pupils are making good or better progress at this school. However, there have been inconsistencies in pupils' rates of progress and attainment within different key subjects over time, particularly by the end of key stage 2.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. As a result, the majority are ready for their move to the Year 1 curriculum when it comes.
- Pupils from vulnerable groups do well because leaders and governors ensure that the school provides for their needs successfully. There are too few pupils from these groups to make meaningful comparisons about their outcomes in this report.
- Phonics provision is a strength of the school. Younger pupils are able to use what they have learned in phonics lessons to help them decode difficult words, even resorting to sharing songs with the inspector to help remember key elements to help them read.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 2 compare well to other schools nationally. This has been consistent over time and indicates that pupils continue to make good progress after leaving Reception. Classroom visits, including talking to pupils and looking at their work, confirmed that this continues to be the case.
- Pupils are making increasingly good progress as they move through key stage 2, although the school's own in-year assessment information shows that there are inconsistencies within some year groups and between subjects. In particular, most-able pupils need to make more accelerated progress if they are to achieve their full potential by the end of Year 6.

- Leaders responded well last year after results in national tests at the end of key stage 2 highlighted weaknesses in mathematics provision. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics improved from well below average to average when compared to other schools in provisional results for Year 6 in 2018. Current pupils are also making better progress due to the changes made in the way that the mathematics curriculum is delivered.
- Disappointing provisional results at the end of Year 6 highlighted weaknesses in the progress that pupils make in reading. Leaders are currently tackling the issue with urgency and rigour. Small cohort sizes and other circumstances, including mobility, all played a part in headline results. However, leaders know that more needs to be done to ensure that pupils' progress improves, including the progress of most-able pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed and provides a good quality of education for the small numbers of children who start school here each year. Parents are particularly positive about the care and attention that staff provide for their children. The arrangements for a mixed Reception and Year 1 class work effectively because staff understand how children learn, and they have a good grasp of the Year 1 curriculum.
- Staff in the early years work well as a team. Communication is good. They know children well and as a consequence, understand what each child needs as next steps in their learning journey.
- Relationships between children are strong. Staff are happy to stand back when required, resulting in truly child-initiated learning, when children share their own thoughts and discuss their learning with their friends, learning from each other without the interference of adults.
- Staff plan appropriate next steps in learning in the Reception Year, and for the pupils in Year 1, who share the class. However, they are not afraid to alter plans when opportunities present themselves. During a classroom visit, which resulted in a delayed mathematics session, but became a purposeful writing and personal, social and emotional development session, the inspector was pleased to see evidence of pupils' adaptability, when writing 'get better soon' cards became a high priority.
- Children in the early years benefit from specialist teachers in the same way as other pupils across the school. During the inspection, children delighted in mimicking elephants in a music lesson which was closely linked to their work on African animals. Although delivered by a specialist teacher, support staff were at hand to record progress and offer guidance and challenge where needed, resulting in enjoyable learning and development in key areas of the early years foundation stage.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the early years. Outcomes at the end of the Reception Year are consistently good over time. Classroom visits showed evidence of children putting what they have already learned since joining the school into practice in their art work and in their writing for instance.
- Children behave well and feel safe in the early years. Expectations are high. Children who have just joined the school learn from pupils in Year 1, who set a good example

for them. This results in a happy and harmonious classroom, where children are increasingly independent and confident in their surroundings.

School details

Unique reference number	110012
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10052915

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	113
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roland Cundy
Headteacher	Mrs Jacquie Vanstone
Telephone number	01189 732 166
Website	www.finchampsteadschool.org
Email address	admin@finchampstead.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 May 2012

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. As a school with a distinctive Christian ethos, the school was last subject to an inspection under section 48 of The Education Act 2005 in July 2017. The headteacher was appointed in January 2018.
- Pupils are based in four mixed-age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are small numbers of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is low. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also low.

Information about this inspection

- This school was selected for inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was subsequently deemed to be a section 5 inspection under the same Act by Her Majesty's Inspector, and a full section 5 inspection was then carried out.
- Classrooms were visited on both days of the inspection. During classroom visits the inspector observed teaching and learning, assessed the quality of pupils' work and talked to them about the progress that they were making. All classroom visits were accompanied by the headteacher.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed in classrooms and as they moved around the school. This included at the start and finish of the school day and at breaktime.
- The inspector attended a whole-school collective act of worship and heard pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the business manager, three governors, a group of pupils, and representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector talked to parents in the playground at the start of the second day of the inspection. He also took into account 21 replies to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and the accompanying free-text messages.
- A wide range of documents and policies were scrutinised, including those regarding the safety of pupils. As well as looking at pupils' work in classrooms, a separate sampling of pupils' work in mathematics and English was held in the presence of the headteacher and mathematics subject leader.
- The school's self-evaluation, development planning and information about pupils' outcomes were considered. Minutes of governing body meetings and notes of visits from the local authority and diocese were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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