

# Fitzherbert CofE (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection report

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|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 112883         |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Derbyshire     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 395761         |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 10–11 May 2012 |
| <b>Lead inspector</b>          | Ronald Hall    |

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>                     | Voluntary aided                                     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 43  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                  |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Ian Cooper  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Joan Foster   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 6 May 2008  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Ashes Lane<br>Fenny Bentley<br>Ashbourne<br>DE6 1LD |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01335 350362  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01335 350362  |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | headteacher@fitzherbert.derbyshire.sch.uk           |

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|---------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>          | 4–11           |
| <b>Inspection date(s)</b> | 10–11 May 2012 |
| <b>Inspection number</b>  | 395761         |



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Ronald Hall

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine lessons or parts of lessons, taught by three teachers. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including that relating to pupils' progress, school improvement, mathematics and attendance. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and with pupils. The inspector took account of the views of 37 parents and carers who returned the questionnaires sent out prior to the inspection and those questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the normal times is high. Almost all pupils attending this very small school are of a White British background. The proportion of the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a smaller than average number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed Reception/Key Stage 1 class. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds a number of nationally recognised awards including the FA Charter Standard, Healthy School Status, the Bronze Eco School, Activemark and Artsmark awards and the Full International School award.

**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>2</b> |
| <b>Achievement of pupils</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Quality of teaching</b>            | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b> | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Leadership and management</b>      | <b>2</b> |

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Good leadership and management ensure the school is rapidly improving. Pupils, staff, parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that the school has a happy, caring and family-like environment. The school is not outstanding because the proportion of consistently outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure that pupils make the most rapid progress.
- Pupils make good and occasionally outstanding progress. Attainment is above average in both key stages. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is good across the school.
- Teaching is good, and it is very often outstanding. Most lessons are interesting, challenging and fast paced. In the few lessons that are less interesting, pace and challenge are not sufficient. Many lessons have opportunities for pupils to work independently. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Many use good questioning to extend learning but this is inconsistent. Good leadership, including well-targeted professional development, has improved assessment, monitoring and tracking procedures leading to accurate lesson planning. Verbal feedback to pupils is excellent but marking does not always provide pupils with sufficient knowledge to move their learning on.
- Pupils' well-developed sense of equality reflects the school's successful work in promoting understanding of disability and difference. Their very positive attitudes towards others ensure that there is no bullying; pupils feel safe and behaviour is outstanding. Pupils have an excellent attitude to learning.
- The school's success has been brought about by the dynamic leadership of the headteacher. With strong support from her staff, she has ensured that all share her determination to promote high-quality provision throughout the school. School leaders check the quality of teaching and manage performance rigorously and provide constructive advice and staff training. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently pupils' achievement, are constantly improving.

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

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- Improve teaching further by ensuring that written feedback is as robust and precise as teachers' very good verbal feedback to pupils.
- Raise achievement further by developing the questioning skills of all staff, particularly support staff, to improve pupils' understanding and skills.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with age-expected levels. Children get a good start in the Reception class and make good progress in all the areas of learning because teaching is consistently good. The good focus on children learning the sounds that letters and combinations of letters make (phonics) means they are well prepared for reading and they gain a real enthusiasm for stories and books. In an excellent Reception class lesson, for example, pupils made rapid progress in developing their skills. They were enthralled by the teacher's expert and lively way of reading.

In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics continues to be of high priority and consequently attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate that they have acquired good strategies to tackle unfamiliar words in their reading books and have gained a good level of independence in their reading. This pattern continues throughout the school so that by the end of Year 6, reading is of a high standard, with a high proportion of pupils reaching above expected levels. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with vocabulary and imagery so that they develop a feel for words.

A very large majority of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires rightly felt that their children are making good progress at the school, and that their needs are very well met. The inspector found that the quality of learning in all lessons observed was good, and was sometimes outstanding. Pupils' number skills, in particular, have improved markedly since the previous inspection, and most are confident in solving number problems. Where new initiatives are applied diligently many pupils make outstanding gains in mathematics and English. However, their not yet being fully embedded prevents progress from being better than good.

The school works very effectively to support pupils who enter the school mid-way through the year. Detailed plans to support these pupils, and timely interventions, ensure that they make similar progress to that of their classmates. Comprehensive systems are used to assess and track pupils' progress. Detailed records enable leaders and teachers to keep a close check on how individuals and groups of pupils are doing. Assessment records show that any differences in performance between boys and girls are quickly closed. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve standards that are above those of their peers nationally. Staff are quick to identify pupils' individual needs and appropriate interventions are put in place. Teachers and teaching assistants provide

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effective support and challenge. They help pupils by demonstrating skills precisely, and teaching specialist vocabulary. Parents and carers rightly feel that achievement in the school is good.

### **Quality of teaching**

Inspection evidence supports the views of parents and carers that their children are taught well. Teachers' planning is a strength, especially evident in the very clear detail used to show what pupils of each ability group are expected to achieve. A particularly strong feature is that planning focuses very sharply on the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Good quality planning, linked to very effective support in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants, contributes significantly to the good progress in lessons and the rapid improvement in standards.

Teachers' use of the school's 'creative curriculum' is highly effective in promoting good learning and progress. In Key Stage 2, where the topic is stories, pupils immersed themselves in the characters and plots. By trying to put themselves in the roles, pupils learn to have a real empathy with the characters and this, in turn, promotes effectively their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In one outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils made excellent progress exploring the volumes of 3D shapes. Across the school, there is convincing evidence that the creativity that has been built into its curriculum is motivating and enthusing pupils in their learning.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially in terms of their learning to work independently. Management of behaviour is good and learning is effective because work is matched closely to pupils' needs. While teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is excellent, marking of pupils' work occasionally does not let pupils know how they can improve their work. While most lessons are brisk and challenging, there is still the odd occasion where lessons are not as well paced. Questioning is generally excellent but is not consistent and this is especially the case where support staff lead groups.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils have a very strong understanding of how to stay safe both generally and in relation to e-safety. The excellent relationships between pupils and adults have resulted in pupils themselves taking responsibility for controlling their behaviour effectively and developing a very positive attitude to learning. All pupils are very positive about behaviour. As one put it, 'We are one big happy family.' All feel, rightly, that behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils make an exceptional contribution to their own learning. They respond very positively to opportunities to work independently and collaborate extremely well together. During the inspection, nothing but exemplary behaviour was seen across the whole school and this is said by parents, carers, pupils and staff to be typical.

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Excellent records show that there are only very occasional instances of misbehaviour, and no exclusions. There have been no instances of bullying of any kind, and pupils confirm this and recording documents are accurate. There have been no issues relating to racism, sexist or homophobic behaviour. Pupils unanimously say that staff deal with all types of issues very well.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They take great pride in their work and try hard to do their best. As far as possible, pupils are fully involved in assessing their own performance and that of others. They are encouraged to make choices in different situations, to be focused on achieving their targets and have respect for all. Attendance is above average. Pupils and staff feel very safe and parents and carers unanimously and justifiably concur.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has a clear and unwavering vision for the school which is supported and implemented by all staff. She communicates her high expectations clearly, so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Consequently, all aspects of the school have improved since the previous inspection. School leaders keep thorough checks on all aspects of school performance and manage the quality of teaching well. The senior team use their excellent coaching and mentoring skills to offer constructive advice and training, and use their most effective teachers particularly well to extend and share good practice. In this way, the quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving. However, leadership and management is not yet outstanding as there has been insufficient focus on developing staff questioning skills and ensuring continuity of written feedback to pupils.

The governing body holds the school to account for its work well and has been influential in helping secure effective school improvement. Good practice in safeguarding and child protection is evident in all areas of the school's work. For instance, checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and meet current requirements.

School leaders have ensured that the exciting and well-planned curriculum is well thought out so that pupils from all backgrounds can enjoy learning and achieve well, and it successfully promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils are taught to be thoughtful and reflective and consider the needs of others. The school works extremely well in partnership with other schools and with external agencies to secure extra support for those pupils who need it. In this highly inclusive school, every child matters and individual needs are considered very specifically. The school promotes equality and ensures that there is no discrimination by carefully tracking the progress of all groups of pupils so that there are no gaps and all groups make good progress.

Even though the school has many good features, the staff and the governing body are not complacent and want to improve pupils' progress even further. They know

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exactly what actions to take next as a result of thorough systems of school self-evaluation. In view of the strong improvements made to provision and pupils' outcomes in the last three years, the school's capacity to improve further is good.



## 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.**



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Fitzherbert CofE (Aided) Primary School, Ashbourne, DE6 1LD**

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently, particularly those of you who read to me or spoke to me about your work and what it is like to attend your school. Thank you, also, for responding to the questionnaire.

I am writing to tell you about the inspection.

- Your school is a good school. This is because you make good progress in lessons and treat each other well. You told me, and your parents and carers agreed, that the school is a happy place to be.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and pupils in both key stages make good progress, especially in English and mathematics.
- You told us that your teachers care about you. They have improved how well they assess your learning and plan lessons to make sure you make progress. These things ensure teaching is good.
- You learn a lot and contribute to your school being a safe, happy and friendly place to learn. You told us that bullying is rare. Your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent.
- Those who lead your school have ensured that it has improved a lot since the last inspection.

We have asked the senior leaders to:

- ensure all staff ask searching questions to enhance your learning
- ensure that teachers written feedback to you is as good as their very good verbal comments.

You can all help by maintaining your highly positive learning attitudes and attendance.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall Lead inspector

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