

Finchampstead CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110012
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	378034
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Jacqueline Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roland Cundy
Headteacher	Sandra Symms
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons and part lessons, taught by six teachers, amounting to almost six hours in total. For all of the observations, the inspector was accompanied by the headteacher. Some teaching assistants were also observed at work with pupils. The inspector held meetings with staff, school leaders and representatives of the governing body, as well as talking to pupils of all ages. She took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's policies, including those relating to safeguarding, data on pupils' progress, attendance figures and development planning. She scrutinised pupils' work and evaluated 95 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The pupils come from predominantly White British as well as from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language, though none of these is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times for transfer is average overall but above average in some year groups. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

There are four mixed-age classes. Several times a week, children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught in separate classes for literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are also split several times a week into three ability groups for English and mathematics lessons.

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

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. The strong focus on creating a caring community by the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body ensures that pupils continue to achieve extremely well in their learning while developing exceptionally well as individuals.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress. As a result, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is significantly above average, especially in reading and mathematics. Pupils have a really clear understanding of how well they are doing, what they need to do to get even better and where they are aiming next. They are extremely keen about all the school has to offer and display enormous enthusiasm for learning.
- Behaviour is exemplary. The particularly effective focus on pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means their ability to consider others, and to be thoughtful and compassionate, is extremely well developed.
- Teachers regularly share with pupils their high expectations of what the pupils can achieve both academically and personally. They plan lessons that are demanding and interesting. A broad and creative curriculum underpins pupils’ success in English and mathematics and other subjects. The outdoor learning environment is continually being revamped and developed in order to add another dimension to pupils’ learning. The school is keen to enhance the opportunities it provides to act as a catalyst for improving pupils’ writing.
- Outstanding leadership and management, including the management of performance, have created a school that is both reflective and forward looking. Very rigorous checking of the quality and impact of teaching constantly seeks out ways in which pupils’ achievement can be maximised. As a result, since the previous inspection, teaching overall has improved from good to outstanding and consequently so has pupils’ progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the strengths in the use of the outdoor environment to broaden pupils' learning experiences and accelerate progress, particularly in writing.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Across the school, pupils are really clear about their learning, talk with considerable confidence and share their ideas willingly with one another. For example, Year 1 pupils writing to the Queen as part of their Jubilee celebrations discussed whether they had been successful in making their writing interesting enough by including 'wow' words. They checked their own and each other's work, exclaiming 'I need a better "wow" word here.' More-able pupils were further challenged and stretched as they wrote in paragraphs, explaining you needed to group the same ideas together to make a paragraph, demonstrating this successfully in their letters. All pupils are engaged very effectively in the next steps in their learning as a result of regular opportunities to check whether they have met the success criteria for each lesson as well as responding to comments teachers make when marking work.

Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are in line with those expected for their age. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils achieve extremely well. Parents and carers overwhelmingly agree that their children make good progress. Overall attainment, including for reading and mathematics, is significantly above average by the time pupils leave school compared to their peers nationally. Attainment in writing, while above average, is not yet as strong as these other subjects. However, progress has accelerated and the gap between attainment in writing and reading has narrowed because of, for example, the rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and creative approaches to the groupings of pupils for English lessons. Nonetheless, maintaining the focus on pupils' achievement in writing remains a priority. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported with their visual impairment, learn exceptionally well in class, on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, because the work is very closely matched to their needs and the support staff are highly skilled.

Children make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning as a result of effective organisation and careful assessments. Children use the skills they learn in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) as they read and write. In Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress in learning to read and their attainment is significantly above average by the end of Year 2. There is a similar picture of attainment in Year 6, with some of the most-able pupils working within the challenging Level 6, well above the levels expected for their age. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils transfer the language of reading to other subjects. For example, one pupil told the inspector she needed to skim the text from the

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slideshow she was watching on the interactive whiteboard. When asked to explain, she replied: 'I can't read it all as it's going too fast so I'm picking out the key words to get the meaning.' Older pupils are extremely proud of their role as reading buddies, supporting younger pupils and modelling good reading.

Quality of teaching

The teaching observed on the inspection was typically outstanding and never less than good. The key features of the outstanding teaching seen across the school are: the extremely good relationships adults have with children; the highly effective use of the many additional adults both in class and in leading small groups; and the consistently top quality questioning adults use to challenge and extend pupils' learning. Together, they contribute to helping pupils develop their very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils speak very highly of the way in which they are taught, a view with which the overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree. Classrooms are welcoming, interesting and attractive environments which support learning extremely well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the range of activities for the indoor and outdoor classrooms enhances different aspects of the children's development very well. However, the limitations of space in the outdoor learning environment sometimes hamper opportunities for children to learn as they explore and play independently.

The interesting activities and very good relationships between staff and pupils keep the pupils focused. Teachers regularly use paired talk which supports their speaking and listening skills extremely effectively and also their social development through negotiating ideas. Marking is of exceptional quality across the school. In lessons, pupils are regularly given time to reflect on teachers' comments which highlight where pupils have achieved their targets and the next steps they need to consider. Pupils value these comments and try very hard to incorporate them into their next pieces of work. Consequently, progress is often rapid and sustained. Learning objectives, success criteria and knowledge of the levels they are working at are shared particularly well with pupils, and staff are consistent in ensuring that the pupils know exactly how to be successful in their tasks. Staff in this caring school know pupils' abilities extremely well. This is because of the highly effective checks regularly made on their progress and the considerable skill with which the school adapts and targets the well-focused support it gives them as a result. For example, the level of challenge was extremely high for higher-achieving pupils in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson. Through investigating the properties of a triangle, they were able to prove Pythagoras' theory for working out the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well taught, both in class and in extra support sessions. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to this highly effective additional support. They also contribute significantly when working with teachers in class.

Teaching of basic skills is highly effective with plenty of opportunities to use and develop these literacy and numeracy skills as pupils work in other subjects. Similarly, meaningful links are constantly being made between subjects. Staff take every

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opportunity to thread the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into their teaching such as the highly successful '5 R's of readiness, responsibility, resilience, resourcefulness and reflection'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school's high expectations, strong caring ethos and aim to develop pupils as independent learners are key factors in pupils' high attendance and exemplary behaviour. Staff deploy extremely good strategies to promote outstanding behaviour. As a result, pupils confidently explain what makes the difference between good and outstanding behaviour, and told the inspector that was their goal. Parents and carers praise the approach of teaching staff and other adults alike. One parent, whose comment was typical, said: 'We couldn't wish for a better environment for our child. It inspires kindness, curiosity, self-worth as well as help in the community.'

Opportunities to take responsibility in class, in the playground and as part of the school council provide excellent ways to extend pupils' excellent moral and social development. The Heart of the Community awards for acts of kindness and thoughtfulness in the wider community are rightly highly prized by the pupils.

Pupils feel very safe in school, a view endorsed overwhelmingly by parents and carers. Incidences of bullying, such as name-calling and cyber-bullying, are rare. Indeed, pupils were keen to tell inspectors it hardly ever happened. They readily explained how they would deal with a range of types of bullying, and to whom they would turn for help if they needed it. The vast majority of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire commented positively on how the school deals with behaviour. Pupils agreed that behaviour is typically good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, supported extremely well by members of the governing body and other leaders, provides a clear vision for how the school can move forward. There is a tremendously positive spirit and a real team atmosphere of 'can do' among the staff. Together, they have driven improvement, stemming from systematic and rigorous checking of the quality of teaching. School development planning links very well with professional development activities and performance management. The success of these initiatives can be seen in pupils' steadily improving achievement and the considerable efforts that have been made by the school to involve parents and carers in every aspect of the school's work since the last inspection.

Close tracking of the progress of individuals, including those newly arrived at the school, results in rapid identification of any potential underachievement, and ensures that any gaps in performance between groups of pupils are quickly addressed. This, together with the absence of any form of discrimination, confirms that the school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. Parents and carers, as well as pupils, are listened to and their opinions valued. Leaders, managers and members of the governing body are effective in ensuring rigorous arrangements to keep pupils

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safe, including the vetting of new staff appointments.

The school has been very effective in securing a curriculum which both supports the rapid learning of basic skills, and interests and excites the pupils. The leaders have successfully focused on providing an even wider range of memorable first-hand experiences to act as stimuli for pupils' writing from the Reception class right through to the oldest pupils. It is keen to build upon the many developments it has already made to the outdoor learning environment over recent years to accelerate pupils' progress further. Links with outside agencies help the school to enrich the curriculum extremely well, for example through the additional sports coaching or the much-enjoyed music lessons that have enabled whole classes to learn to play an instrument. The curriculum combines with the ethos of the school to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.

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).

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.



31 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Finchampstead CofE VA Primary School, Finchampstead
RG40 4JR**

Thank you for talking to me and showing me your work when I visited your school. I was pleased to hear that you like school a lot and how much you enjoy all the activities that the teachers plan for you. I agree that you get along really well together and look out for one another. I think your school gives you just the right help so that you know how to behave extremely well and keep safe. You understand about different types of bullying, and you say that it hardly ever happens because the teachers deal with it really well.

The inspector found that Finchampstead is an outstanding school. The curriculum meets your needs really well and teachers are excellent at helping you make rapid progress in your work so that you reach well above the expected levels by the time you leave the school. The leaders in the school know just what needs to be done to make sure your school keeps on getting better. In order to help you to reach even higher levels in writing, we have asked the staff at your school to continue to use the outdoor spaces on your school site as much as possible to provide you with lots of experiences that stimulate your ideas and imagination.

You can all help by continuing to try very hard and work and play really well together. Thank you again for helping me with my work.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Marshall
Lead inspector

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