

Furzefield Primary School

Delabole Road, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3PA

Inspection dates 15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Standards in both English and mathematics have risen steadily over the last three years.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some teaching in Key Stage 2 is outstanding.
- Teachers and other adults have high expectations and these help children to learn well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from generally below expected starting points.
- Pupils are keen and enthusiastic to attend school and show positive attitudes both to each other and to their learning. They enjoy their lessons and behave well in and around school.
- The school provides a safe environment in which to learn. Pupils say they feel safe and well looked after.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body provide effective leadership and have ambitious plans to further improve the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing in Key Stage 2, especially in pupils' use of grammar, spelling and punctuation, are not good enough.
- The methods for communicating clearly to parents and carers that the current headteacher has put in place have yet to have full impact.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough time to learn and work on their own, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders.
- They talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and their attitudes towards school. Inspectors looked at pupils’ work across different subjects and by year groups.
- Inspectors met with members of the school management team, members of the governing body and the local authority school improvement adviser to discuss the ways in which they are driving improvement for the school.
- They considered the 51 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 14 responses given by teachers and teaching assistants in the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to parents and carers at the start and end of the school day to gain an impression of their views about the school.
- They looked at a range of documentation, including the school’s data on pupils’ current progress, teachers’ planning and assessment of pupils’ work, minutes of governing body meetings and also information relating to behaviour and attendance and evidence concerning safeguarding.

Inspection team

Marion Hobbs, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
John Collins	Additional inspector
Jill Thewlis	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra funding made available by the government to support certain groups of pupils, is above average.
- The majority of pupils have English as their first language and the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- A specialist resource centre, The Ocean, provides for the needs of pupils identified as having moderate learning difficulties. The children's centre, also part of the school site, includes a nursery, Shining Stars, for children aged three.
- A higher proportion of pupils than those found nationally is supported at school action and school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise opportunities in all subjects to promote independent learning throughout the school.
- Improve standards in writing for Key Stage 2 pupils by:
 - focusing on the teaching of grammar, spelling and punctuation
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their writing skills in different subjects.
- Ensure that parents and carers fully understand the school's systems, especially in relation to behaviour, and feel that their views are always heard and valued.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school with skills that are generally below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage which prepares them well for moving into Year 1.
- The school has an improving picture over time of closing the gaps for all groups of pupils in all subjects. Gaps, evident in the 2011 national tests and teachers' assessments, have closed rapidly, particularly in mathematics, and for the more able in mathematics, where a group of girls attained well above the national average for the higher Level 6 at the end of Year 6.
- In English and mathematics, combined results at the end of Key Stage 2 for middle and higher ability pupils are now in line with or exceed national averages.
- When looked at separately, attainment and progress in writing, although they have a positive impact on pupils' achievement, are lower than in reading and mathematics across the school. The school is addressing this robustly in order to secure better outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Progress for most significant groups is improving in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Where attainment is still below the national expectations, gaps are closing and the school has a firm grasp on tracking these pupils' progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress thanks to the high-quality support they obtain in classes. Teachers and teaching assistants plan activities carefully so that pupils are able to achieve in line with their classmates.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in line with their peers owing to the good use of the funding the school receives to provide additional support. A breakfast club, homework club and specific intervention class groups all combine to fully support the needs of these learners.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is underpinned by a whole school focus on reading and mental mathematical learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children benefit from a stimulating environment in which to explore and learn. Indoor and outdoor provision supports the needs of these pupils well and enables them to make good progress. Consistent approaches to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) mean that reading skills develop well.
- Teachers have high expectations and plan lessons that motivate pupils to learn. Pupils in Year 6 spoke enthusiastically about their study of micro-organisms and the breadth of their understanding relating to the Gunpowder Plot. Teaching assistants are employed skilfully to give extra help to individuals and small groups of learners.
- The quality of teaching for those pupils attending The Ocean fully supports their needs. Imaginative and stimulating approaches to, for example, storytelling enable pupils to engage with complex ideas whilst developing their use of letters and sounds (phonics).
- Typically, the pace of lessons is brisk so that pupils learn new knowledge quickly and no time is wasted. Questioning usually encourages individual pupils to deepen their understanding and often pupils are asked to develop their learning through talk, sharing ideas aloud about how to use language effectively and/or solve problems mathematically.
- Success in getting pupils to talk in order to promote and extend their learning and understanding now needs to be matched by high-quality opportunities for personal reflection in writing. On a few occasions a lack of opportunities for pupils to develop ways of working independently, in some activities especially in Years 3 to 6, sometimes slows progress.

- Teachers' good subject knowledge means that English and mathematics are generally taught well. Pupils comment on their enjoyment of lessons. However, the school recognises that it needs to place greater emphasis on explicitly teaching grammar, spelling and punctuation in order that all groups of pupils are better placed to make expected, or better than expected, rates of progress in national tests for writing.
- Reading and reading for pleasure have been key priorities for the school over the past two years, with the result that reading at Key Stage 2 for all pupils is now a little above the national average. The school library is attractive and well stocked and pupils use this regularly to support them with their personal enjoyment of reading. Author visits and book signings are another regular means of developing a culture of reading for all.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs, along with those who are eligible for the pupil premium, are all well supported in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants plan and work closely together to help these pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and feedback explains clearly what pupils need to do in order to improve their work further. When asked, pupils understand their targets and are keen to try to exceed these.
- Homework is set regularly to support learning. A homework club, run by teaching assistants after school and funded by the pupil premium initiative, ensures that vulnerable pupils are well supported to succeed in this aspect of their study.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around school is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to work and are keen to take part in lessons.
- When asked, pupils say they feel safe and that bullying is not an issue at their school. They understand different forms of bullying and appreciate the ways in which the school teaches them about safety, for example in lessons and through assemblies.
- The majority of parents and carers who completed the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) agreed that their children are happy, safe and well looked after by the school. Staff also agreed that behaviour is good. The school is confident that the few concerns about behaviour raised by parents and carers to inspectors in conversation at the school gate are being addressed, both through more effective methods of contacting parents and carers and the new school website.
- The school encourages pupils to take responsibility for behaviour by appointing 'buddies' who help at play and lunch times in open spaces, such as the playground and dining hall. The school council is another pupil group which contributes to the good behaviour and safety of all, for example through the funds they raise to buy indoor and outdoor play equipment.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well by all staff. School rules and procedures are applied appropriately and pupils fully understand these. Records show that the number of incidents and exclusions have fallen over time.
- Rates of attendance show an improving trend over the last three years and overall attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, leadership team and governors consistently communicate high expectations and a shared vision to help the school continue to improve. Staff, pupils and parents and carers all recognise and value this.
- As a result of the strategic work carried out by the governing body and senior staff in the past two years, and since the appointment of the current headteacher in September 2010, teaching is now good. Performance management and professional development are closely linked to improving outcomes for pupils. Governors monitor this work closely.

- The local authority school improvement adviser works alongside the headteacher and senior staff to drive improvement at all levels. Her strong support since the current headteacher's appointment has had direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school and in securing improved outcomes for all significant groups of pupils.
 - Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide academic support to identified individual pupils and groups of pupils by the number of teaching assistants employed by the school. As a result, pupils make at least good progress. Assistants are used well in classes working alongside teachers to support groups and individual pupils, as well as in running a regular homework club and breakfast club.
 - The school curriculum is broad and balanced and matched well to the needs of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Outdoor learning, through for example the Forest School and educational visits in the local area, further enriches all pupils' experiences.
 - Pupils are supported well in their spiritual, moral social and cultural development in lessons, extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs as well as other educational experiences, for example visits made by different kinds of writers.
 - Displays in classrooms and throughout open spaces in and around the school celebrate diversity and equality. The curriculum and building have been adapted appropriately to ensure that all groups of pupils have equal access to all that the school offers. The naming of school year classes by national countries and increasingly more distant global countries helps to develop pupils' understanding of themselves as modern, global citizens.
 - The school is actively seeking to engage parents and carers more fully in their children's learning. Better understanding of pupils' personal targets in relation to national expectations of progress is now regularly shared at parents' evenings, and parents and carers are encouraged to attend school assemblies and performances whenever possible.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is fully committed to providing high-quality support and challenge to the school. The Chair of the Governing Body is the local parish priest and, as a result, liaises effectively between the school and members of the community. Governors involve themselves as much as possible in the daily running of the school. They attend lessons, school staff training days, work with teachers and support at parents' evenings in order to understand the school well. Governors work closely with senior staff to monitor the quality of teaching across the school. They regularly review performance management of staff throughout the school and relate staff salary progression to pupils' progress. They work with the local authority school improvement adviser to set personal targets for the headteacher. Effective sub-committees oversee all aspects of the school's activity and ensure that the school meets statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding. They take great care to see that resources, including financial resources, are used well to support all pupils' learning. The governing body has made effective use of the local authority school improvement provision, as well as creatively deploying funding to buy in external consultancy to help the school move forward swiftly in terms of teaching and learning and outcomes for pupils. This is having positive effects on pupils' progress rates and on attainment levels. The importance of continuing to develop clear, strong links with parents and carers, which some parents do not think are as effective as they could be, is recognised fully by governors. The new interactive school website is one initiative that is helping to support this aspect of the school's work.
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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	125130
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	406291

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Val Williams
Headteacher	Susan Chrysanthou
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 January 2011
Telephone number	01737 642842
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