

Findern Primary School

Buckford Lane, Findern, Derby, DE65 6AR

Inspection dates 2-3 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although pupils reach average standards in reading, and mathematics, too few reach the higher levels in their work. This means that some pupils of higher ability should be doing better.
- Pupils achieve better in English than they do in mathematics. Standards are rising rapidly in reading and writing but progress is slower in mathematics.
- Occasionally teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are not high enough and so progress is steady rather than rapid.
- The rate at which pupils make progress is too variable. It is slower in some years, typically Years 3 and 4, and often much quicker in Years 5 and 6.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for in this nurturing environment. Most parents agree that their children are happy and well-looked after. Attendance is consistently high.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective and these pupils make good progress.
- Teaching programmes support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school's provision has recently been enhanced by its becoming a Forest school.
- The headteacher, supported by a perceptive and well-informed governing body, and with advice from the local authority, is ambitious and is driving improvements in teaching. Initiatives to raise standards are beginning to take effect.
- Leaders are dedicated to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to be successful and have recognised that more needs to be done to foster the achievement of higher attaining pupils. The management of teachers' performance management is wholly focused on this issue.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by five teachers. Five of these were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector visited some short sessions where small groups or individuals were being taught by teaching assistants and heard children read.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed at playtimes, lunch times, in lessons and in assembly.
- The inspector held meetings with school leaders and other staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents, including school records of pupils' progress, development planning, safeguarding policies and records relating to attendance, safety and behaviour were inspected, as well as the work in a range of pupils' books.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents through the 25 responses recorded on Parent View, the on-line questionnaire, informal conversations with parents bringing their children to school and reading the comments that some parents sent in by letter and email.
- The views of staff were gained from conversations and a scrutiny of responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are more boys than girls. Pupils are usually taught in four mixed age classes.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the additional pupil premium funding is low. In this school it applies to pupils known to be entitled to free school meals and to children from Service families.
- The proportion of pupils is below average at school action but above average for pupils at school action plus or with statements of special educational need.
- No pupils are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school holds a number of awards in recognition of the quality of its work. These include Healthy school status, Activemark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, and, recently, Findern became a Forest school.
- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher took up her permanent post in February 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more of it is consistently good if not better, by:
 - making sure all lessons have the good pace, variety and challenge seen in the best lessons, so that pupils are motivated to learn
 - ensuring teachers plan lessons which closely match the learning needs of every individual pupil, whatever their ability
 - making sure every teacher has high expectations and does not accept inadequate amounts of work from any pupil.
- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that work is consistently hard enough for more able pupils so that the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 and Level 5 increases
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to think problems through and solve them for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils reach average attainment levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. In writing, an above average proportion gain the higher level 5 but fewer pupils achieve the higher level in reading and mathematics. Pupils' best work is seen when they are expected to solve problems and think for themselves. These qualities are not always given the same emphasis in all year-groups.
- The same picture is evident in Key Stage 1. Pupils are doing better in writing overall but too few pupils reach level 3. The school's information about the progress of the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils shows that standards are likely to rise in 2013.
- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills which are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. Improving teaching and a good learning environment are helping to increase the rate of progress that children make and ensure they are well prepared for the harder topics they will encounter in Year 1.
- Better teaching of reading and phonics is helping pupils to make faster progress in Key Stage 1 after a dip in 2012. Girls are doing better than boys in reading and writing but the boys are performing better in mathematics.
- Pupils in the Year 3-4 class are making better progress this year because the headteacher has split the pupils into their two year groups every morning so that they are taught separately for English and mathematics. This is leading to faster progress but it is too soon to see the full impact of this initiative. Some pupils, especially boys, work too slowly and do not always complete their work.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported both by teachers and teaching assistants and as a result they make good progress from their various starting points.
- The pupils known to be entitled to receive funding through the pupil premium are making the same progress as others. The school has used this additional funding very effectively to provide smaller teaching groups for English and mathematics each morning and a better range of reading books. These are also the first pupils to benefit from the forest schools initiative. Consequently, there is no gap between their attainment in either English or mathematics and that of other pupils in the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across all lessons, both over time and during the inspection, so that progress is too variable, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Where teaching requires improvement it is because the pace is slower, all the pupils are doing the same tasks and the lessons are not planned to take sufficient account of the different levels of ability in the class. Pupils agree that sometimes work is easy and it is rarely too hard.
- Sometimes all the pupils listen to the same introduction, when some could get straight on with

more challenging work. Sometimes more able pupils are waiting for others to catch up.

- Nevertheless, teaching is improving and has several strengths. All teachers are energetic, work hard and are committed to improving the progress pupils make. All teachers taught some good lessons during the inspection.
- As a result of the efforts of the headteacher and others to improve teaching, teachers are now setting higher expectations for what pupils can achieve in most lessons. Some lessons are split into timed activities so that the pace of learning is brisk. For example, in a challenging Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils relished the task of plotting co-ordinates on treasure maps, all with just the right level of difficulty for the different abilities in the class.
- Teaching assistants are well-briefed and effective in supporting the learning of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They give pupils time to think things out for themselves. They also manage small groups of pupils who need extra support in speaking, listening, writing and mathematics well. The school caters for children who have a wide range of complex needs very effectively.
- Marking is consistently good in all classes and is one of the teaching strengths. Teachers give plenty of advice on how pupils can improve their work and the pupils respond by repeating or adding to what they have written.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is usually good but sometimes the pace is too slow so that children sit for a long time listening to the teacher rather than actively learning. Children are able to work and play indoors and out in the well-resourced outdoor classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- All the pupils spoken to during the inspection agreed that behaviour is typically good and that they feel safe and well-looked after in school. Most parents agree.
 - Pupils say that bullying is rare and if it occurs it is quickly dealt with by the school. Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying and know that racism and name-calling of any kind is not acceptable. A review of the behaviour log confirms that there are few incidents and that they are dealt with very effectively.
 - Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations such as on the road, using the internet and social media and through the curriculum they are aware of the dangers of alcohol, drugs and smoking.
 - Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and helping younger ones. The Forest School initiative is starting to help pupils to develop self confidence, resourcefulness and perseverance.
 - Attendance is consistently above average and reflects the enjoyment pupils find in school.
 - Pupils' attitudes to learning are good when teaching is interesting and challenging. Pupils usually concentrate well in class, listen to their teachers and work well together in pairs or groups. The pupils are polite, friendly and keen to talk about their work. Some pupils are not motivated to learn independently and sometimes work too slowly, occasionally failing to complete the work
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set.

The leadership and management are good

- Last year pupils did not make enough progress. The headteacher's steadfast leadership is putting an end to this. While there is still room for better performance by some pupils, standards are rising, staff are more ambitious, teaching is better and this is raising pupils' achievement. Actions to improve mathematics and reading have been well thought through, but it is too soon to judge the full impact of these on pupil's attainment.
 - Challenging targets are now set for teachers and pupils. The headteacher has instituted pupil progress meetings every half term and teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make. Teachers' assessments are now accurate so that everyone is aware of which pupils need extra help or challenge. The headteacher has made a firm link between teacher's performance in the classroom and what they are paid.
 - All matters from the last inspection have been dealt with effectively. Attainment in writing has risen, the school has developed several links with other schools and safeguarding fully meets requirements.
 - Equality of opportunities is improving because the gaps between the achievement of different groups of pupils is narrowing or has disappeared.
 - Within a small school all staff have to take on some responsibility. Leaders are working hard to make sure that planning, teaching and marking are all leading to better achievement. The special needs co-ordinator has excellent links with other services so that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive expert guidance and support.
 - The school works hard to encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. Most parents are pleased with the environment and positive atmosphere in school. A minority expressed concern that there was insufficient challenge for higher ability pupils and inspection evidence confirms this is currently the case.
 - Teaching programmes are rich and well-balanced and increasingly, if not yet wholly matched to pupils' needs. There is a clear focus on improving English and mathematics alongside following pupils' interests in the environment. The Forest school initiative is already developing pupils' imaginations and encouraging them to take on responsibility and develop leadership skills.
 - The local authority has provided focused support to help the school address weaknesses in mathematics. This has already had an impact on progress this year. The local authority comments the promptness and enthusiasm on the part of the school to respond to advice and put it into practice.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very well informed about the school through numerous visits and attendance at school events, as well as acting as regular volunteers in school. They have a good range of expertise and are passionately committed to ensuring the school improves. They realise that in the past too much emphasis has been put on the schools' strengths in nurturing and caring for pupils and not enough on academic excellence and progress. They are now focused on helping the school to move forward. Governors attend training sessions to increase their expertise.
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They understand the data and know how to compare the school's performance with other similar schools. They pay particular attention to how the headteacher manages teachers' performance and know where it needs to improve. They are well-informed about how the additional pupil premium funding is spent and ensure it is spent only on those for whom it is intended. They fulfil their duties with regard to safeguarding rigorously. The budget is efficiently managed.

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	112551
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	411955

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Holmes
Headteacher	Jane Read
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2010
Telephone number	01283 702150
Fax number	01283 702150
Email address	info@findern.derbyshire.sch.uk

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