

Forches Cross Community Primary and Nursery School

Forches Avenue, Barnstaple, Devon, EX32 8EF

Inspection dates 15–16 October 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Over time pupils' achievement has not been good enough in Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is not consistently matched to pupils' needs, abilities and interests and does not always secure their full engagement in learning.
- Over time leaders and managers have not done enough to secure good teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 classes.
- Pupils' attendance is not good enough and steps taken by leaders and managers have not been effective in bringing improvement.

The school has the following strengths:

- Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception classes, where they settle quickly and make good progress.
- Senior leaders and managers, including governors, have worked effectively to secure consistently good teaching through Key Stage 2, and as a result, pupils achieve well in this Key Stage.
- All staff work effectively to keep pupils safe and senior leaders ensure that additional funds are used well to provide a wide range of support programmes for pupils.
- Success in bringing and then sustaining the good quality of provision and pupils' achievements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2 demonstrates the capacity of leaders and managers to bring further improvement.
- Pupils enjoy good relationships with adults. They behave well at break times, feel safe and are well cared for.
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour well, enabling an increasing number of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, to contribute fully to their learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons and were accompanied by the headteacher during some of these observations. The team inspector also attended a parents' meeting.
- The inspectors observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and the lead inspector also attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and break times. The inspectors also met with governors and representatives of the local authority and the lead inspector held a separate telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders.
- The inspectors received 31 staff questionnaires. The inspectors also spoke informally with a number of parents and carers as they arrived with and collected their children from school. Not enough responses were evident on the online questionnaire (Parent View) to inform the inspection. The inspectors also considered an email communication from a parent or carer and examined parents' and carers' responses to the school's own questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fran Ashworth, Team Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well above the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is well above that found nationally.
- The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a part-time Nursery class and in a full-time Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that teaching and learning strategies more precisely meet pupils' differing needs and abilities and systematically advance their basic literacy, numeracy and independent learning skills
 - strengthening the work of leaders and managers in providing more stimulating learning activities for the pupils in this key stage
 - increasing the pace of learning and raising expectations of what pupils can and should achieve.
- Leaders and managers need to work more effectively in bringing pupils' attendance to a level that matches that of most schools by:
 - establishing a wider range of incentives and rewards to enthuse pupils in attending school more regularly
 - working more closely with parents and carers in raising attendance, including as pupils transfer from class to class and especially when moving from Reception to Year 1.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching over time in Key Stage 1 mean that not all pupils achieve well enough in this key stage. This is because pupils are not always challenged or inspired by the work they are set in lessons in Years 1 and 2, and so do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Children enter the part-time Nursery class in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age, especially in aspects of communication, language and literacy and in managing feelings and behaviour.
- In response to well-organised teaching and stimulating practical learning opportunities in the Nursery and continuing in the Reception class, children sustain good progress.
- By the time they enter Year 1, despite achieving well in relation to their starting points, the skills of a large minority of pupils are still below the levels expected for their age.
- Despite some improvement this term, national data and a scrutiny of pupils' work over time and observations of pupils' responses in lessons show that progress varies too much and requires improvement through Key Stage 1. Even so, the slightly below average scores in the Year 1 phonics (letter sounds) screening test reflect some improvement in the pupils' early reading skills in relation to their low starting points.
- In response to much more consistently effective and occasionally outstanding teaching in Key Stage 2, pupils' progress quickens, enabling them to achieve well through this key stage.
- The pupils' ability to contribute to their own learning is also developed well, especially in Year 6, and this is enabling an increasing number of pupils to attain above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics, which also shows a strong challenge for the more-able pupils.
- Above average attainment in reading also shows the degree to which a continued emphasis on teaching phonics in this key stage, at a level that matches pupils' levels of skills and understanding, is accelerating progress.
- Across the school, pupils eligible for the pupil premium make at least the same rates of progress as other pupils across the different key stages.
- Achievement gaps have been closed, equally in English and mathematics and especially in Key Stage 2, because of the additional, carefully targeted, often one-to-one teaching pupils have received. This is seen for example, in the early support given to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and extra help provided for some pupils in Year 5.
- Similarly effective additional provision helps pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs to also make the same progress as their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because over time and currently, it is not yet consistently good in Key Stage 1. Teaching in these classes is not always matched well enough to the pupils' differing abilities, does not enthuse pupils or challenge them sufficiently to work harder and to learn at a faster pace.
- These inconsistencies lead to some pupils losing interest and not building systematically on previous skills, including their ability to learn and to complete tasks well on their own. As a result, too many pupils have not been fully prepared to apply these skills successfully on entering Key Stage 2.
- Even so, determined leadership and development of teaching by senior staff have secured good and sometimes even better teaching in Key Stage 2 classes.

- This especially is the case in Year 6, where the teacher's high expectations, lively, well-organised delivery and very effective encouragement given to pupils when expressing ideas and contributing to their own learning, greatly accelerates their progress; as seen for example, during a mathematics lesson when pupils responded enthusiastically to the teacher's sharp questioning to successfully extend their understanding of square numbers.
- Steadily but surely other teachers in Key Stage 2 systematically bridge gaps in pupils' previous learning, as seen for example, by teaching phonics in Year 3 at a level that is accurately matched to pupils' understanding.
- Teachers in Years 4 and 5 classes are also successful in extending pupils' willingness and ability to more purposefully organise and contribute to their own learning. This was seen for example, during an English lesson, when pupils used 'I can do' and other check lists independently to ensure their correct use of similes and metaphors.
- Across the school additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium ensures that these pupils learn as well as other pupils. All teaching assistants, for example, provide high-quality care, but at times, again mostly in Key Stage 1, expectations of what pupils should achieve vary and slow progress.
- In recent years senior leaders have been particularly effective in establishing consistently good teaching in Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, children settle quickly and prompted by lively questioning from adults, stimulating routines and a strong emphasis on learning through practical activity, are making good progress.
- For example, children in the Nursery responded excitedly when questioned by 'Harry' the soft puppet and took turns respectfully when greeting the teacher each morning. In Reception too, carefully guided by adults and consistent routines, children moved purposefully into their freely chosen learning activities and sustained concentration well, for example, when asked to count the legs along 'The Green Caterpillar' or to sort and order a variety of toys.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

- Behaviour for learning in lessons is variable and requires improvement at times. This is because some pupils, especially in Years 1, 2 and 3, unless given close adult support, have difficulty contributing as well as they should to their own learning.
- Pupils say that behaviour is improved, but some in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 classes also said that sometimes children talk when the teacher is trying to talk.
- Despite rigorous efforts by the headteacher and the local authority's education welfare officer in liaising with parents and carers to bring improvement, attendance continues to be below average. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1, where poor attendance is hindering efforts to quicken pupils' progress.
- Even so, inspectors' observations showed that older pupils, especially in Year 6, often make outstanding contributions to their learning and respond very positively to the increased expectations placed on them by empowering teaching.
- Observations in Nursery and Reception classes also show increasing numbers of younger children responding to consistently good teaching and rapidly developing the social skills needed to engage well in learning.
- Pupils also behave well at lunch and morning break times and respond well to the efforts of older pupils acting as 'table monitors' and increased sporting and play equipment at lunchtimes.
- Records of reducing incidents of misbehaviour and the need for less exclusion, especially of older pupils, also show that pupils' behaviour has improved over time.
- Pupils know that bullying can take several different forms, for example, verbal abuse. While older pupils understand about safety and cyber bullying, younger pupils are less familiar with

these terms. In general though, pupils know how to seek help and how to look after each other. They say that they feel safe and happy and enjoy coming to school.

- Most staff in their questionnaires and the majority of parents and carers who shared their views with inspectors agreed that unacceptable behaviour is much reduced and that while there are a few instances of bullying, these are dealt with effectively.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because actions to rectify weaknesses in teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and to raise pupils' attendance have not been sufficiently focused.
- Rigour in challenging parents and carers whose children do not attend regularly enough has not been accompanied by other strategies, such as incentives to reward and encourage more regular attendance. Similarly, while checks of teachers' performance have secured strong teaching in other parts of the school, over time inconsistencies have not been addressed fully in Key Stage 1.
- Even so, challenges resulting from redevelopment of the local community, which led to a falling roll and staff redundancies, have not prevented improvement in other aspects since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have used self-evaluation carefully to generally manage finances and the staff's professional development and progression along pay scales effectively.
- The dedicated headteacher, aided by a closely knit leadership team and supportive governors, sustains high aspirations for the school. Positive developments, for example, are evident in continued strengths in teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 and the formation of a vibrant and effective Early Years Foundation Stage unit, where children are also achieving well.
- Effective use of additional funds, such as the pupil premium and sports funding and funds to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, also shows that there is capacity to improve further.
- Well-organised additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs promotes equal opportunity for all pupils and all staff are diligent in eliminating discrimination.
- Warm supportive relationships and a broad and balanced range of learning activities, including a residential visit to South Wales, where the children experienced a range of outdoor mountain activities, also promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Significant strengthening of learning opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and currently in Key Stage 2 through shared themes such as Ships, have secured consistently good progress by the pupils, but some inconsistency in providing suitably exciting learning activities in Key Stage 1 weakens progress at times.
- All statutory requirements related to safeguarding are fully met.
- The local authority has provided effective 'bought in support', which has contributed to improvements mentioned earlier.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors fulfil their statutory obligations and undertake the required training to ensure their effective support of senior staff in safeguarding pupils' welfare. The governing body has contributed effectively to decisions about the spending of additional funds, such as the pupil premium. This has resulted in pupils in receipt of this support making progress that is at least equal to and at times better than that of other pupils. A similarly effective role in ensuring efficient use of the new sports funding is now supporting, among other opportunities, a

widened range of well-resourced sports activities to enrich pupils' well-being during lunch breaks. Governors make regular visits to the school to see the quality of teaching and pupils' learning for themselves. Governors consult with senior staff in sub-committee meetings to check that management of staff performance and salary progression contribute to the strengthening of pupils' progress. Currently, this has not been as effective in Key Stage 1 as in other parts of the school.

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	113127
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	427293

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	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Stein
Headteacher	Paul Wisken
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2010
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