

Forest Fields Primary and Nursery School

Bradgate Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham, NG7 6HJ

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils achieve well. They join the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected of three-year-olds. They make good progress throughout the school, and by the end of Year 6 standards have risen to match national averages.
- Teaching is good, and the relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. As a result, pupils learn in a caring environment and are not afraid to take risks in their learning because they know they will be supported.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behave well. They enjoy school very much, have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well.
- The headteacher and her entire team work well together for the good of the pupils. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders and governors know well the strengths as well as the areas for improvement.
- Senior leaders check the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching carefully, to make sure both are improving well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Only a small amount of teaching is outstanding.
- The activities planned for the most able pupils are challenging during the main part of each lesson, but not enough during the introduction to speed up their progress.
- Teachers sometimes direct pupils too much, rather than encouraging them to be independent and take control of their learning.
- Pupils do not have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Leaders in charge of particular subjects or teams of teachers are not yet rigorously checking all aspects of teaching to raise pupils' achievement even further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons, six of which were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils and four members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and talked to them informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and the school's most recent parental survey. They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 47 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils' current progress and records of governing body meetings, teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. The way disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catered for was also carefully reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

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Full report

Information about this school

- Forest Fields Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group from Nursery to Year 6, apart from the Reception Year and Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in a separate Nursery unit and three Reception classes.
- Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and nine out of ten speak English as an additional language, with an increasing number at an early stage of learning English in every age group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for certain groups – in this school pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is higher than average.
- Forest Fields Primary School meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In 2013, the governors appointed a new head of Years 5 and 6 and one new teacher started at the school in February, and one in September.
- Major building work took place in the school over the previous year.
- There is a breakfast club managed by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by making sure that:
 - the most able pupils are challenged right from the start of each lesson
 - all pupils have greater opportunities to work independently and take a lead in their own learning
 - pupils have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Further improve pupils' achievement by making sure that staff who lead subjects and teams rigorously monitor and evaluate all aspects of their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery with communication and language skills that are particularly weak. The nurturing environment, activities and tasks that meets their needs effectively and a clear focus on extending vocabulary and developing spoken language ensure that they make good progress. Even so, children enter Year 1 with standards that have risen but are still below the levels expected nationally for their age.
- There was an improvement in Year 1 phonics work (the sounds that letters make) in 2013. In 2012 most pupils did not achieve the expected standard. However, due to the training of staff and grouping pupils by ability so that teaching better matches their needs, pupils have a more secure understanding and a higher percentage achieved the national standard in 2013.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this is not a true reflection of the good progress pupils make. For example, in the 2013 group, one third of the pupils had not been at the school since the beginning of Year 1. The vast majority of these pupils speak English as an additional language and some spoke little or no English when they arrived at the school. Senior leaders recognise that pupils in Year 1 and 2 require considerable support. As a result, a Polish-speaking teaching assistant has been employed and much support is given on a small group basis. This is having a positive impact.
- Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Reading was the weakest area of performance in 2013. School data show that improvements to reading are clear in lower age groups and are working through. However, the current Year 6 pupils' books show that they do not have good, regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils find learning to be fun. Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups. Senior leaders use resources wherever they are needed to make sure all pupils achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Those eligible for the pupil premium receive additional one-to-one and small group support from adults. A parent support worker has also been employed on a part-time basis to help support pupils and their families. As a result, these pupils achieve in line with or even better than their classmates in English and mathematics. For example, the 2013 Year 6 results showed that pupils eligible for free school meals were on average over two terms ahead in reading and writing and nearly one term ahead in mathematics.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and those from all different ethnic backgrounds achieve well. Good proportions of pupils make or exceed nationally expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils usually make good progress. Some Year 6 pupils are taught mathematics by a teacher with advanced skills and experience of getting pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment. However, they are not always fully challenged during lesson introductions.

The quality of teaching is good

- Caring relationships and good teaching are the foundation for the successful learning for pupils. When pupils are asked about their teachers their faces light up, showing the high regard they

have for them. Parents are very happy with the quality of teaching and comments such as, 'My child has made very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics,' were typical. Children who are new to speaking English explained how they quickly learn enough to teach their parents English and interpret for others in the class who are new to learning English.

- The teaching of reading is improving and writing and mathematics are taught well. In the best lessons, teachers and teaching assistants plan activities very well together to make sure pupils are given work that matches their ability and enables them to find things out for themselves. Consequently, pupils learn rapidly.
- Highly effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. Accurate assessment leads adults to be able to plan appropriately for next steps in learning. As well as effective teaching of key skills, children are helped to think about what they are learning and to develop the skills of working by themselves and collaborating with others.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and, as a result, most pupils behave well and only a very small minority need gentle reminders.
- Teaching assistants are effective and need little guidance because they know their roles well. They provide good support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the classroom. They also help to provide a wide range of support in literacy and numeracy to help pupils who are falling behind in their learning to quickly catch up.
- Homework is set on a regular basis to reinforce and extend the learning in class. The school's website informs parents of 'Top Tips' for supporting reading. It asks them to focus on reading aloud, learning new words and getting children to 'lose themselves in the story', as both children and parents develop key vocabulary in English.
- Assessment and marking of pupils' work are of consistently good quality because teachers adhere closely to the marking policy. The system of target setting is having a strong impact as it has helped to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Most pupils know the levels that they are working at and the level they need to move to. This has a strong motivating effect and pupils do their best to get to their target grades.
- Teachers plan activities for the main part of a lesson which match the different abilities of pupils effectively. However, introductions to lessons can be the same for all ability groups and, as a result, some pupils are not fully challenged during this time. For example, in a Key Stage 2 numeracy lesson introducing fractions, the most able pupils could already identify the fractions of the pizza being divided for the family meal. This slowed the progress they made.
- In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, the class watched a film called the 'Dark Wood' and the teacher asked pupils to use powerful adjectives, alliteration, adverbs and similes in their descriptions of the gloomy forest with strange creatures. She made clear what she was looking for and let the pupils get on with their task. Pupils were in control of their learning and working independently. This gave pupils confidence and enabled them to make good progress. However, some lessons are controlled too much by the teacher and this does not allow pupils to become effective independent learners who can work by themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In this caring school everyone is included. As a result, comments from parents such as, 'My child loves school' and 'My daughter is really happy here' are typical.

- Pupils want to do well in school and are proud of their achievements. This was clearly seen when a pupil in Key Stage 1 was bursting with enthusiasm to give an answer to the numerical poser set by the teacher. Pupils are highly positive about receiving their 'Achievement Assembly' award, which recognises their good behaviour and work over time.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils know the fire drill procedure as well as the steps to take if a fire started at home because the fire brigade have spoken to them. Pupils have designed posters about how to keep themselves safe if a stranger approaches them. They also know about cyber bullying and the importance of informing an adult if they see any inappropriate content on their computer screens.
- Pupils' understanding of different cultures is excellent. Parents value and comment positively about how pupils from different cultures have integrated so well. Pupils enjoy celebrating Eid and learning about different cultures during their daily contact with classmates from different backgrounds. They enjoy the opportunity to learn Spanish in Key Stage 2 and make links with friends in schools in Spain. Pupils also enjoy following the journey of one of their teachers as she travels around the world and makes links with families and schools abroad.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities. The school council raises money for charity and has helped with safety for children using the ice-cream vans on the streets in the community. Prefects are very proud that they are role models, and act as buddies to younger children and show visitors around school.
- Pupils speak highly of the wide range of sports opportunities in badminton, football and cricket, as well as the city-wide competitions in which they participate. They know about healthy lifestyles and, for example, the importance of having a healthy heart rate and a good diet.
- Attendance is in line with schools nationally. Staff work hard to deter families from visiting their country of origin during term time and emphasise the link between high achievement and good attendance.
- Behaviour is not quite so good during unstructured periods such as break and lunchtimes. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that they may experience bullying staff quickly sort things out. Racism is not an issue.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in a safe and stimulating environment, both at the beginning and end of the school day, in the breakfast and after-school clubs.

The leadership and management are good

- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The majority of teaching is good and improving. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, and any who are not making expected progress are identified and supported. The understanding that staff have about pupils' progress and the use made of this information to plan lessons are strong features of school management.
- Senior leaders have a clear focus on improving teaching and observe teachers regularly. Teachers are given clear judgements about the quality of their teaching as well as strengths and weaknesses. Opportunities to improve are provided for staff via the sharing of good practice through the strong links with partner schools, and in-house coaching and training.

- Parents speak very highly of staff. They are kept up to date via the school website and regular newsletters are sent home. Parents attend meetings about the curriculum and provide help during school visits. Volunteers from Nottingham Trent University help to run the 'Right to Read' scheme as part of the school's drive to improve reading.
- The curriculum ensures that all pupils have a diverse and interesting education. Arts are a strong feature. Pupils are involved in producing a variety of artwork such as mosaics, stained glass windows and paintings. Staff provide 'real life' experiences for pupils in the classroom. Pupils regularly participate in visits out of school such as local walks, visits to art galleries and museums and outdoor activity centres. A good range of clubs outside school hours such as art, choir and sports clubs provide good enrichment. This all plays a part in pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has used national sports funding to broaden the range of sports on offer to pupils as well as using sports coaches to enhance the work of teachers so they become more skilled at leading sports themselves. This is having a positive impact on the attitudes of pupils and they are looking forward to experiencing an even wider range of sporting activities.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has monitored the school's effectiveness and given 'light touch' support.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all current national requirements. This has been particularly important during the extensive building work on the site. Senior leaders have managed the disruption well and made sure it has not had an impact on pupils' progress.
- Although leaders of subjects and teams of teachers are monitoring and evaluating aspects of their areas such as pupils' books, they are not fully monitoring all aspects such as teaching and learning, or teachers' planning. This is limiting their impact on improving pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher contribute to the local authority graduate teaching programme and is developing the support she gives to other local schools. The school provides induction for newly qualified teachers. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are members of a local schools alliance and contribute to improving pupils' progress study groups. The governors confirm that this work has benefited the leadership of the school and helped to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement at Forest Fields.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely well organised and very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development. They have a good understanding of the school's performance in the national context because they check its work for themselves by undertaking 'learning walks' in the school. They undertake suitable training, for example in data analysis, safeguarding and finance. This means they are able to give good levels of challenge to the school's leaders about, for example, pupils' progress, and have been rigorous in consistently monitoring any underperformance. Governors carry out their statutory duties very diligently, making sure that the headteacher's performance is rigorously assessed through annual objectives. They have a good awareness of the quality of teaching across the school, how staff performance is managed and how this links to pay rises and promotion. Governors manage the budget effectively. They are aware of how the pupil premium is being used and the impact it is having, and they carefully monitor the school's finances.

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	122733
Local authority	Nottingham City
Inspection number	427325

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	522
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Batchelor
Headteacher	Sue Hoyland
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2011
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