

Ford End Church of England Primary School

Main Road, Ford End, Chelmsford, CM3 1LQ

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

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.

- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in mathematics and social skills, due to good planning and leadership.
- Attainment rates are rising in Key Stage 1 after a period of staffing disruption. Pupils' good progress is reflected in the rising quality of their work.
- Pupils make good progress and attain well in Key Stage 2. Mathematics is a strength. Achievement in reading is good. Writing is rising to match it.
- Teaching is consistently good. Pace, challenge and expectations are high.
- Attendance has improved and is now high.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. They enjoy good relations with each other and adults, and are well engaged in lessons.
- The headteacher, staff and governors' determination to improve teaching and achievement is resulting in rising standards.
- Subject leaders have been allocated to make best use of their skills. Work with the local schools' cluster has refined their monitoring and evaluation procedures.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Staff do not have enough opportunities to observe and share their best classroom skills with each other and other schools.
- Some teachers are better than others at challenging pupils to reflect on what they have learned and take it a step further.
- Pupils do not always make use of staff guidance about how to improve their work and eliminate errors.
- Extended writing skills are not consistently developed across subjects. Information and communication technology is not regularly used to enhance writing skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by five staff. Three joint observations were carried out with the headteacher. The inspector also observed a range of activities the school provides to support individuals and small groups of pupils.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, a representative of the local authority, the school's external improvement partner and a group of pupils.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, the inspector took account of the 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own survey of parents' views and responses from 16 staff to an inspection questionnaire. The inspector spoke to parents in the playground before school.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He also looked at: the school's development plan and self-evaluation; data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance; records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching; a wide range of policies and procedures; and the school's arrangements for the safeguarding of children.
- The inspector attended a whole-school singing practice led by the headteacher. He carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work jointly with the members of the senior leadership team and subject leaders.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has loose links with a local cluster of schools and with the larger Chelmsford education network.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school has recently experienced a period of disruption to staffing.
- A small number of pupils join the school at times other than the usual starting points.
- The large majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below the national average. This is additional government funding for particular groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority. Numbers are very small.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - providing more opportunities for teaching staff to observe and share what they do best in the classroom, both across the school and with other schools
 - improving writing skills through an increased and consistent emphasis on extended writing in all subjects studied and ensuring that pupils make more regular use of information and communication technology to enhance and develop their writing skills
 - ensuring that all teachers challenge pupils' thinking, to enable them to reflect on what they have learnt and take it further
 - ensuring that pupils use the guidance given by staff to improve their work and eliminate errors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The small cohorts of children enter the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding below those expected for their age but covering a wide range of ability. Current data from the school's own baseline assessments show a marked number of pupils working below age-related expectations. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress with their learning, especially in mathematical and social skills. Language skills and understanding of the world are slightly weaker but developing well due to good planning and leadership.
- Following a recent period of disruption to staffing, which affected the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils are now making good, and increasing, rates of progress in both stages and in all subjects, although writing is slightly weaker than reading and mathematics. More able pupils are also making increased rates of progress due to the consistently high level of challenge now in place across the school. Pupils' work shows clear evidence of the rising rates through the amount and quality of the work in the books and reflects their positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils who join the school at points other than the usual starting times make similar progress to their peers. Their needs are quickly assessed and monitored and work adjusted to ensure understanding and steady progress, and that all pupils enjoy equal opportunities to progress and develop.
- Pupils achieved well above national levels in the Year 1 screening check on the links between sounds and letters (phonics) in 2012 and the 2013 cohort, which was less able, achieved broadly in line with national standards.
- Progress and attainment have been strongest at Key Stage 2. Numbers at each starting point are very small; nonetheless, expected progress has been above national averages for several years. More than expected progress rates are also rising and more able pupils progress well. The school is currently working to raise the number of pupils making three levels of progress, especially in writing. Work on a multi-media approach to writing is beginning to have an effect, but the school acknowledges that use of information and computer technology, particularly to promote writing skills, is an area for development. Attainment in mathematics has traditionally been an area of strength with above average proportions of pupils now accessing the highest levels.
- It is not possible to comment on the attainment and progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding without the possibility of identifying them. Funding is used well so that pupils are well supported in class, their needs are quickly and accurately identified and strategies in place meet individual needs in this small school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar rates of progress to their peers. Progress rates are rising as procedures for checking on progress and supporting pupils are refined. Current data indicate that pupils are attaining well, especially in reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling. Well-trained learning support assistants ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to develop speaking skills wherever this aspect has been a concern.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They have regular opportunities to read aloud and to practise breaking down words into letters and sounds. Their reading record books show that they read regularly at home. The range of books on offer and the close link to pupils' interests are leading to improvements in writing as a result. More able readers bring their own books into school to

enhance what is on offer in the good school library and this helps raise further the standard of their reading.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good but it is not yet outstanding because some teaching still requires improvement. The sharing of what teaching staff do best in the classroom is at an early stage of development, within the school and with other schools, in order to raise the quality of teaching to the very highest levels.
- Teaching in the very large majority of lessons seen during the inspection was good. No inadequate teaching was observed. Joint observations of teaching with the headteacher resulted in agreed judgements.
- Teachers plan carefully to ensure that lessons are lively and interesting, with rising rates of challenge. In writing lessons, pupils are encouraged to talk to their partners as a preliminary to writing activities; this helps them refine their ideas. Questions are used well to check that pupils have understood what is being taught. The work of learning support staff consolidates understanding well because assistants check on areas of difficulty without giving pupils the answer.
- Where teaching requires improvement, work does not always provide enough challenge to individuals to demonstrate that they can reproduce what they have learned and apply it to the next phase of their learning. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned are inconsistent in these lessons.
- Where teaching is best, pupils are able to demonstrate and speak about what they have learned and how they have developed their skills, including through projects. Pupils' recent activities in a space topic show high levels of thinking and independent work. More able pupils are making good progress because of such tasks, the challenging activities and the resources at their disposal in lessons.
- Reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills are well taught. Mathematics work uses a wide range of hands-on materials with tasks related to situations pupils might encounter in everyday life. Pupils read on a one-to-one basis so that teachers can spot how well they break words down into sounds and letters. Writing tasks are carefully modelled but information and communication technology, while well-used by teachers, is at present not well incorporated into lessons to develop writing skills.
- Literacy skills are inconsistently reinforced by work in other subjects. In a Reception class lesson on measuring, children were encouraged to use a wide range of words to estimate the differences between sizes relative to what else was around them. When they iced biscuits by following instructions for quantities, the children had to point out to the teacher which words were verbs and which were nouns so that they concentrated on the 'doing' words. However, such good practice is not yet fully shared across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are closely monitored. Their needs are accurately assessed. The well-trained learning support assistants who work with pupils know their individual needs, have high expectations and probe sensitively to assess levels of understanding.
- Marking and assessment procedures are good. The school assesses progress in reading, writing and mathematics each term in order to refine teaching and provide pupils with clear guidance on the next steps they must take. Most pupils know their targets in numeracy and literacy and

homework set reinforces these areas. Pupils' work is neatly presented. They are proud of the work they are doing and eager to show it off to others. However, pupils do not always use the guidance given by staff about how to improve their work and eliminate repetition of errors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They arrive promptly to lessons, neatly attired, and settle quickly to work because the tasks on offer engage them and make them eager to want to know more. They work well with adults and each other, being prepared both to share ideas and to ask questions. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on using formulas to find numbers, pupils came up to adults to share what they had done and to ask for the next task so that they could continue their exploration of numbers into three digits.
- The range of approaches in lessons, with materials suitably adapted for learners, ensures that pupils have equal opportunities to learn and progress in lessons. Pupils are known as individuals and this results in very positive attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils are aware that the school is at the heart of its local community. They take seriously their responsibility to be good representatives of the school. The school council spoke clearly about the high standards of behaviour they expect and the work that they do to ensure those standards, including checking on how their fellow pupils behave. Pupils and their parents feel that behaviour is consistently good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe in school. Their parents agree. Pupils feel strongly about the need to support each other and confirm that support from adults, whether or not there is a problem of any kind, is constant and readily available. As one pupil said, 'This school is just like one big family.' The 'buddy bench' and work by older pupils to assist the very youngest are two of the ways in which pupils are made to feel safe and valued. Newsletters and guidance around the school reinforce the promotion of safety.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare because the anti-bullying message is promoted continually in class and via assemblies. Any difficulties are quickly resolved. Pupils were able to talk about the different types of bullying, such as name calling, cyber-bullying and homophobic bullying, and understood the potential impact of such behaviour.
- Attendance rates have risen and are now high. The school has worked with the education welfare officer and parents to communicate the importance of not taking holidays during term time. Exclusions are rare. Governors keep track of both attendance and exclusion rates.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has been well supported by the senior leadership team, staff and governors in her efforts to take the school forward. Together, they have implemented a well-focused development plan to ensure that standards of teaching, attainment and progress rates continue to rise. Self-evaluation is accurate and links with the local cluster of schools and the larger Chelmsford education network have been developed. At the same time, the headteacher has established an ethos of pride in the school because pupils themselves feel that they are well taught and well behaved.
- The roles of subject leaders have been reassigned to ensure best use of staff skills. The senior teacher liaises with secondary schools so that pupils are well prepared for the transition to Key Stage 3 and the next stages in their education and development. Another subject leader has

developed programmes in problem solving in mathematics and taken advantage of able writers' workshops offered by the local network. New subject leaders are offered further training, including an introduction to subject leadership, to underline the importance of accountability and close tracking of progress.

- The range and variety of subjects on offer is broad and balanced, with a focus on making subjects more exciting and broadening the skills with which pupils leave the school. For example, all pupils are taught to type and recorder lessons ensure that pupils can read music. Visits, visitors and residential trips give pupils a perspective on the world beyond the school gates. The school also makes good use of the rich seam offered through sharing of knowledge and memorabilia with the surrounding village.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has close links with the local church and diocese. Pupils have good opportunities to use their imaginations in art, music, play and writing. Moral considerations are reinforced in assemblies, circle time and philosophy for children sessions. Pupils get on well with each other, including in the breakfast club setting, are involved in local initiatives and like to talk to visitors about their school. The school has regular links with a school in Uganda; Israel is the focus for this year's multi-cultural week. These widen pupils' understanding of life in varied settings.
- Procedures for the management of staff performance are carried out in relation to the 'Teachers' Standards'. Staff are held accountable for the performance of their classes and of individuals. Professional development includes training sessions with other schools in the local cluster which have been especially useful in helping school and subject leaders to refine their practice.
- Links with parents are good. A number of parents are on the school's governing body and the chair of governors stands at the gate every Monday. Regular newsletters, a parents' forum and surveys of parental views help to keep parents informed. The school is also working to develop the partnership with parents further to support pupils' learning at home.
- The local authority has maintained infrequent links with the school to check on progress. Its work is supplemented by the school's links with an external improvement partner who brings additional expertise to the school.
- Safeguarding procedures meet all current requirements. Staff are trained in safeguarding and relevant staff in safer recruitment procedures.
- Sports premium funding has been carefully allocated to ensure that the initiatives to improve health and fitness are sustained and effective over time. Detailed schemes of work and staff training have developed programmes in physical education. Specialist staff from outside the school have contributed effectively to this process and sports clubs are subsidised to extend the activities on offer to pupils.
- The capacity for sustained improvement is good because attainment and progress rates are rising over time, self-evaluation is accurate, staff and governors are working effectively together, the development plan is well-focused and the headteacher is implementing improvements successfully.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. Governors know the school and its local community well and bring a variety of skills to their roles. As one governor said, 'Every child is individually known by all staff so everything we do can be around that child. If children don't want to come here, they don't want to learn.' Governors attend the weekly assembly for parents and are highly visible

at the parents' forum. Governors are well trained in the meaning and use of data, as in the recent focus to ensure that standards in Key Stage 1 were maintained during a period of staffing uncertainty. Governors have challenged the school about how it is intending to fine tune its use of the pupil premium and physical education funding and also about the need to develop information and communication technology to reinforce pupils' learning. They recognise the need to employ experienced teachers because of the complexity of needs and approaches in multi-year classrooms and to award pay increases that are related to performance. Visits are linked to how the school development plan is being applied and to recognising the increasing amount of good teaching; as a result, governors have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching in 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	115115
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	431249

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Braisby
Headteacher	Hazel Arnill
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2009
Telephone number	01245 237209
Fax number	01245 237560
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