

Faringdon Junior School

The Elms, Gloucester Street, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, SN7 7HZ

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In 2013, standards were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, a considerable improvement on the school's first set of results as an academy in 2012.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because their progress is checked closely and additional support is provided when needed.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Consequently, pupils make good progress and the improving trend is being sustained.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding as they have excellent attitudes to learning and cooperate extremely well together. Pupils say they feel completely safe in school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher drive improvement very well and are backed by a strong staff team who shares their vision to become an outstanding school.
- The multi-academy trust brings many benefits to the school, especially in sharing good practice about how teaching can be improved and developing leadership qualities.
- Leaders, managers and governors have been successful in raising achievement and improving teaching since the school became an academy.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils supported by the pupil premium do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 in mathematics because investigation work is not sufficiently difficult for them.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of the teaching assistants' numerous skills; this slows the learning for some pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons, many jointly with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Local Governing Body and other governors, the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Multi Academy Trust and the executive headteacher of the trust.
- The inspectors considered 62 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents.
- The inspectors considered the 21 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maura Docherty

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school. It occupies an eclectic range of buildings that once used to be a girls' high school in the 1920s.
- Faringdon Junior School converted to become an academy school in April 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- Originally, the school combined with the local infant and secondary schools to become an academy trust. In November 2013, some other local schools joined the group to form a multi-academy trust run by a board of directors with an executive headteacher. Each of the participating schools has its own local governing body.
- There are 11 classes. Each year group has three classes, except Year 6 which has two.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides in this case additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and the quality of teaching to outstanding by making sure that:
 - the support in writing for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is as effective as that in reading and mathematics, so that the gap in their attainment narrows
 - there is sufficient challenge in investigations for more-able pupils to reach Level 5 or above in mathematics
 - teachers make sure that teaching assistants are having a consistently positive impact on pupils' learning throughout each lesson.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join Year 3 with average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress in each year group and in 2013 left Year 6 with well above average standards.
- This represented a big improvement on the 2012 results, the first that the new school presented. School information shows that this school year pupils are also making good progress and the improving trend is being sustained. This is because teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- The proportion of pupils who made or exceeded the expected two levels of progress in 2013 was above average.
- While more pupils reached the higher Level 6 in mathematics than usual, the proportion who reached Level 5 was average. More pupils reached Level 5 in reading and writing than did so in mathematics. This is because, at times, more-able pupils are not given difficult enough work to do when conducting mathematical investigations.
- Pupils enjoy reading and have a wide range of materials to choose from. They talk animatedly about their favourite authors and read with great expression, using punctuation as a guide. An innovative 'blog' enables pupils to discuss their reading with one another online and this increases their enthusiasm as well as supporting their writing.
- A focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar has made pupils' writing more accurate, and pupils have plenty of opportunities to write at length. This has resulted in pupils making good progress.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics, where gaps in attainment are narrowing. In 2013, eligible pupils were one term behind the others in reading and over one term behind in mathematics, which is better than the national picture.
- However, in writing, pupils were more than three terms behind their classmates, despite making good progress. This is partly because the other pupils did so well and partly because the support for eligible pupils in writing, while good, did not have as great an impact as that for reading and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the close checks that take place on how well they are doing and the additional support they receive. School records show that pupils make accelerated progress during their support programmes and their attainment is getting closer to how all pupils perform nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much good teaching was observed during the inspection, with some that was outstanding. Teachers have established strong and positive relationships with the pupils in their care, which makes for a happy working environment.
- Teachers are very responsive to pupils' ideas and explore their interests when planning new topics. This led pupils to visit the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford to see Egyptian mummies, which brought the topic to life for them.
- Pupils can often choose the level of difficulty in the tasks they do and this leads them to work with energy and enthusiasm.
- Teaching assistants are trained well and often highly effective when working with small groups of pupils. On occasions, though, teachers do not make best use of them, especially at the beginning and end of lessons. When this happens, teaching assistants find themselves sitting idly by instead of taking an active part in the lesson.
- Pupils make good use of displays to improve their learning. In an example seen during the inspection, they referred to prompts which were displayed and, as a result, developed useful ideas to build up a comprehensive understanding of the phases of the moon.

- Pupils know what they need to do to get to the next level of attainment. Teachers often conduct a useful dialogue with pupils through marking their books, which helps them to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, both in class and around the school. They are very enthusiastic about their learning and work extremely well together, even when teaching is not outstanding. When they have a cover teacher their behaviour is still as good as if it were their usual teacher.
- Pupils are highly motivated to find things out for themselves and do not rely solely on their teacher to manage their behaviour.
- The consistent management of behaviour by all staff contributes very well to the school's positive atmosphere. They ensure that all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.
- For example, Year 6 pupils commented on the quality of presentations by their classmates of their happiest memories.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say how safe they feel at school and do not regard bullying as an issue. Some recent arrivals commented on how safe they felt at this school, having had negative experiences elsewhere.
- Pupils wear their 'privilege cards' with pride. These reward consistently outstanding attitudes and behaviour. Pupils are motivated to move up to the next level of excellence.
- Year 4 pupils buddy up with Year 3 pupils to help them settle quickly.
- Pupils know about keeping safe, especially on the internet. They have a very good understanding of how to deal with potential danger, for example through cycling proficiency.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' great enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are highly ambitious for the school and have set a clear vision to move it to outstanding. High aspirations are promoted throughout the school. Pupils are very keen to do their best to improve their learning.
- Subject and other leaders have grown considerably in their roles since the academy was formed, leading learning, analysing data accurately and supporting staff. This means that they are having a positive impact on the provision in their subjects and areas in each class.
- The school has benefited from its partnership with other schools in the multi-academy trust through sharing best practice, accessing high quality training and developing common ways of working. There have been good opportunities for members of the junior school staff to develop their leadership skills across the group of schools, for example in promoting teaching and learning.
- Leaders carry out regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching over time, which contributes to their clear understanding of what the school does well and how it can improve further. They have been successful in making teaching consistently good, but understand the need now to make more of it outstanding.
- An innovative and imaginative curriculum captures pupils' interest. Teachers make strong links across different subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils' chocolate project included studying Ugandan farming of cocoa, designing packages for a new chocolate product, and creating slogans to persuade people to buy it.
- The school contributes extremely well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the wide range of experiences it offers pupils, and the positive values it upholds. There are plenty of clubs for pupils to enjoy, including an excellent choir, and numerous visits and

visitors.

- Pupils go on exchange visits with other schools in European countries and have close links with the National Trust, which manages local beauty spots. A project to design a new café for a residential home has brought pupils together with an older generation and widened their horizons.
 - The school is spending its primary school sport funding on additional coaching, training for staff and participation in local tournaments. Pupils are being introduced to a wider range of sports and already the uptake is greater. Staff are seeing the benefits in pupils' health and well-being.
 - The school has strong links with parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about its work. Parents are very supportive, and are keen to work in partnership.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of school information on teaching and pupils' progress and how well pupils are doing. They know about the quality of teaching and the links between good performance and pay progression. They take an active role in the school and visit regularly to form their own view of its work. They are supportive of staff, and take a keen interest in managing their performance. Governors make sure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent wisely, and ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fully met.
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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	138009
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	426535

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Mobey
Headteacher	Paul Turner
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01367 240232
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