

# Ferndale Primary School

Wiltshire Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1NX

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Aspirational leaders and managers, including governors, have ensured the school has made rapid progress since its previous inspection.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is typically good and some is outstanding.
- Attainment has risen sharply in recent years because teachers have successfully focused on developing pupils' reading, writing and comprehension skills in English.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics across the school.
- The headteacher is unswerving in expecting only the very best for each pupil. Staff share this relentless drive for improvement.
- Rigorous checks on teaching and good use of training and support for individual teachers, and meticulous tracking of pupils' progress have markedly improved classroom practice and pupils' achievement.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the support their children receive and the continuing improvements at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils are cared for extremely well and feel very safe.
- The school provides pupils with a very exciting range of subjects, topics and experiences which ensure they thoroughly enjoy school.
- The innovative use of information and communication technology for both teaching and learning is very effective.
- Governance is good because the governing body has a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and holds it accountable for pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils reach the higher National Curriculum levels, especially in mathematics.
- In a few lessons, work is sometimes too easy for more-able pupils or too hard for those who find learning more difficult.
- Some teachers do not always tell pupils how to improve their work in marking, or provide time for pupils to follow their guidance when it is given.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons or part lessons, attended two assemblies and listened to groups of pupils read.
- Two lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised the 73 responses to the online Parent View survey along with verbal comments from parents and carers. Questionnaires completed by 37 staff were also analysed.
- Meetings took place with staff, pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised pupils' books, records of pupils' progress, the school's checks on teaching and learning, the development plan, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Carol Warrant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

George Long

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ferndale Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and other groups) is below average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has recently received an anti-bullying award.
- The school has a breakfast club and a morning breakfast café which is run by older pupils with adult supervision.
- A privately run pre-school operates on the school site. It was not part of this inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding in order to enable more pupils to reach the higher National Curriculum levels, especially in mathematics, by making sure that:
  - all teachers have high expectations and match the level of work to pupils' differing needs and abilities
  - marking is consistent across the school, with all teachers giving pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work and ensuring pupils act on the advice given.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement at the end of Year 6 has improved rapidly in English since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in writing and making good progress in reading and writing were above national figures in 2013.
- Achievement in mathematics, for current pupils, is showing similar rapid improvement.
- Pupils' achievement has improved as a result of leaders' strong and successful focus on improving teaching. The school's tracking of pupils' progress and work seen in lessons and in pupils' books during the inspection show that the progress of all groups of pupils, including the more able, is good. Pupils who underachieved in the past are making faster progress and a rapidly increasing number of pupils in all year groups are now working at levels above those expected for their age.
- Pupils' progress in writing has accelerated due to improved teaching and good opportunities to write at length about a range of subjects. As a result of interesting writing activities, often starting with first-hand experiences, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls has closed.
- Children join the Reception classes with knowledge and skills below that typical for their age. They settle quickly and make good progress. They learn early literacy, number and physical skills at a rapid rate because they use these every day in a wide range of purposeful indoor and outdoor activities.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standards in the national screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was average. Those pupils who did not meet this standard in 2012 have been well supported and almost all reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- Most pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and in 2013 reached standards above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium make good progress from their starting points. Their attainment in tests at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with that of other pupils in the school in reading and mathematics, but is lower in writing. The gap is equivalent to just over one term's progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils new to learning English make progress that is similar to, and often better than, that of the other pupils in their classes because the school provides well-targeted support for them.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Since the previous inspection teaching has improved and is now consistently at least good, with some that is outstanding. In these lessons, pupils make rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding because teachers' plans are carefully pitched at the right level for the range of pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on interpreting data, clear explanations and skilful questioning from the teacher, together with excellent support for individual pupils, ensured all pupils enjoyed the increasingly complex tasks they were given and made rapid progress.
- Where, occasionally, teaching is less effective, some pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they are given work that is either too easy or too hard.
- Teachers plan imaginative activities that excite and motivate pupils to succeed. In a Year 4 history lesson pupils enthusiastically followed a playground evidence trail, collected historical artefacts and participated in role play before writing powerful descriptions of the similarities and differences between Celts and Romans.

- Almost all parents and carers rightly think their children are taught well, and pupils agree that teachers make learning interesting and fun.
- Pupils read with enjoyment and expression. A regular programme for the teaching of phonics and reading ensures pupils gain essential skills quickly. Pupils talk enthusiastically about reading and authors whose work they enjoy.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well-managed help which enables them to progress as well as their classmates. Staff commitment and care also ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils new to learning English are supported effectively and progress well.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards confidently to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to use desktop, laptop and tablet computers to present their work and to research information across the curriculum.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked. Although most teachers identify the next steps pupils should take in their learning, this is not yet consistent in all classes and sometimes learners are not given enough time to act on the advice they are given. As a result, some pupils do not always make as much progress as they should.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire said their children are well looked after and are safe in school. Almost all thought behaviour was good.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils are very keen to learn. They listen attentively and respond rapidly to teachers' instructions and questions. They take great pride in their work and collaborate well with other pupils when asked to. They are polite, courteous and have good manners. The school's records show that behaviour seen during the inspection is typical of that found every day.
- Pupils want to do well and please their teachers and this contributes greatly to their good achievement. They play an active role in school and enjoy taking responsibility, for example, belonging to the school council.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Pupils said that, although there are occasional arguments, there is no bullying and, should it occur, staff would deal with it immediately. As a result, they feel very safe in school. They are also taught extremely well about how to look after themselves out of school, particularly with regard to road and fire safety and when using the internet.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Concern for pupils' welfare and safety is a strength of the school. Strong links with external agencies, together with staff who know their pupils extremely well, help to provide sensitive and highly effective support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.
- Attendance is average and has improved when compared to the same period last year.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher has been the driving force behind the school's rapid rise. He is relentless in his drive for continuing improvement.
- He is supported very effectively by energetic and able senior leaders, and committed, experienced governors. There is a shared sense of purpose and ambition to raise the aspirations of pupils and staff even higher.
- The senior team checks the school's performance very closely. Staff morale is high, their team working ethic is strong, and consequently pupils' progress is accelerating.
- Leaders responsible for particular areas of the school and curriculum are involved well in checking pupils' progress and are having an increasingly positive effect on the quality of teaching. They have been given good training and lead their areas extremely well.

- The headteacher has ensured that there are strong procedures in place to hold teachers to account for their performance. Staff do not receive pay increases unless it can be seen that they have successfully helped their pupils to make at least good progress and are meeting high expectations with regard to good practice.
- The progress of all groups of pupils, including those whose circumstances might make them potentially vulnerable, is strong, demonstrating the school's commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The curriculum is organised around termly themes and provides exciting and stimulating learning experiences for pupils which promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils work very well together and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others.
- Pupil premium funding is managed well so that eligible pupils make good progress.
- Primary school sports funding provides professional sports coaching and a range of sports activities. Consequently, pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.
- The school works very well with families, for example the regular community lunches for parents and carers with their children are very well attended. Almost all who were spoken to or completed the online questionnaire would recommend the school to other parents and carers.
- The local authority has provided effective support to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors use their skills, knowledge and experience to support, monitor and challenge senior leaders effectively. They are fully involved in setting performance targets for the headteacher as well as monitoring the effectiveness of targets set for teachers to raise the achievement of pupils. They understand the school's performance information well and check how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Governors visit the school regularly so that they are well informed about the quality of teaching. They ensure that teaching effectiveness relates to pay and promotion. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and check regularly that the pupil premium funding is having the expected impact. Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet national requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135522
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	431104

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	396
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rachel Soare
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793332425
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