

The Fritch Green Academy

Tanton Road, Fritch Green, Dunmow, CM6 3GG

Inspection dates

30 April – 1 May 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.

- Since the academy opened leaders and managers have taken decisive action to make improvements. As a result, teaching is consistently good and improving.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils make good progress across the school and achieve well by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are kind and considerate towards each other and contribute significantly to this harmonious and happy school where they say they feel very safe. They have very positive attitudes towards learning.
- Leadership is strong across the school. Senior leaders work well in partnership with middle leaders, governors and the local authority, ensuring that the school goes from strength to strength.
- Additional adults make a strong contribution to the progress made by pupils.
- The innovative approach to planning the topics and themes helps to excite the interest of the pupils. As a consequence, the curriculum contributes strongly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small number of more able pupils did not achieve as well as they could in mathematics in Year 6 in 2013.
- The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is inconsistent and as a consequence some pupils find it hard to apply these skills to improve their reading.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons or part-lessons. Nine observations were made alongside the Principal or Vice-Principal. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and looked at mathematics work from pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, for the most part accompanied by a senior leader.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records on behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and anonymised records of teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 99 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Written comments from 25 members of staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in Years 2 and 3.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils looked after by the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The number of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the usual times is well above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club that are managed by the governing body.
- The school shares the site with 'The Flitch Green Montessori Pre-School'. This is inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The Flitch Green Academy converted to become an academy school in February 2011. When its predecessor school, The Flitch Green Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding. Since then the leadership team has changed completely, and from September 2012 most of the staff have also changed. The roll has nearly doubled in size. The school is an Apple Lighthouse School and works with schools nationally and internationally to develop the use of information technology to improve learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the teaching of phonics and the early recognition of words in Key Stage 1 in order to improve pupils' reading.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils in mathematics at Key Stage 2, especially more able pupils, by providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in subjects other than mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children arrive with skills typical for their age. They settle very quickly as strong relationships are established with all adults. They are provided with stimulating and lively activities so develop well, and leave with skills above that typically found. For example, children made quick progress in learning to follow instructions, some using video instructions on a tablet computer, others following a recipe to make a pizza. They developed their vocabulary of following a sequence of orders as adults spoke to them about their learning.
- In 2013, attainment was above average at the end of Year 2 in writing and mathematics, and well above in reading. Attainment was also above average in reading in Year 6, and well above in writing, though standards in mathematics were below average. This was primarily due to a small number of more able pupils who did not achieve as well as they could. The school's current data show that progress is accelerating in mathematics across the school. This is also confirmed by the work in pupils' books.
- There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their attainment without identifying them. However, well targeted funding ensures that pupils funded through the pupil premium achieve as well as their peers. Each pupil is given one-to-one support and arrangements are made so they can take part in all school activities including after-school clubs.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Additional adults including parent volunteers provide excellent support in small groups so that their needs are well met and as a result they make good progress.
- More able pupils achieve well now as they are given regular opportunities to extend their learning, and attain higher levels, especially in writing.
- Although many more pupils than average join the school at times other than the usual, these pupils do as well as their peers. Pupils settle quickly and are given extra support if needed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and there is much that is outstanding as teachers create a very positive climate for learning. Learning is often fun and exciting, and little time is wasted.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use tablet computers in all classes to help them share their ideas and check the learning of their peers. Pupils speak highly of how this helps them learn more quickly. As one said, 'Loads of computer products make learning fun.'
- Teachers use their expert subject knowledge to help pupils show a love of learning. Pupils in Year 6 showed excellent attitudes as they worked on problems using data, and the teacher made exciting links with science to keep the pupils focused. As a result they made outstanding progress.
- Teachers plan activities which take account of pupils' understanding, and set tasks which challenge them at the right level.
- Reading is taught effectively. For example, pupils in Year 5 used different materials and equipment including tablets to help them read a variety of different texts. They made rapid progress as teachers and teaching assistants helped them with well-targeted questioning. However, occasionally some pupils are not helped enough to apply their phonics skills to recognise words and improve their reading.
- Pupils acquire calculation skills effectively. An increased focus on regular mental mathematics activities helps to challenge their thinking. Teachers ensure that mathematics teaching is fun and relevant. Children in the Reception class learned how to double numbers as some pretended to be in a restaurant while others used painting to explore number patterns. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to use their mathematical skills in subjects other than

mathematics.

- The contribution made by additional adults is significant, both within the class and in small groups withdrawn from the class. They are well trained, and plan work which challenges the pupils at the right level.
- Teachers give feedback which helps pupils to understand how well they are doing, and what they need to do to consolidate their learning and develop new skills. Frequent opportunities for pupils to respond to written guidance contribute well to their progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their manners are impeccable, and their conduct around the school exemplary. Pupils settle quickly in lessons so that no time is wasted. Their extremely positive attitudes have a significant impact on their learning. As a result, pupils in all classes are making faster progress.
- Pupils have strong relationships with all adults. A culture of respect and consideration is promoted, so that all pupils follow 'the Flitch way'. As a result the school is a cohesive and harmonious community.
- The school parliament plays an active role in helping the school to improve. Members who represent each class say they are proud to be ambassadors for the school.
- There have been no exclusions and few incidents of bullying. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different sorts of bullying, and know, for example, how to keep safe and free from bullying when using electronic equipment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have used the technology available to produce short videos helping others to understand e-safety. They have well-developed ideas about how to keep themselves safe, and have every confidence that adults will help them to resolve any problems beyond their control.
- Pupils say they love coming to school, and their parents agree. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Few if any are late to school. They are very proud to be members of the school community.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong and effective leadership from all leaders and managers has made sure that the significant challenges presented by changes in staff have not been a barrier to the school's continuous improvement. Regular reviews of how well teachers are doing ensure that only high performance is rewarded and that teaching continues to improve.
- The school acts as an ambassador for the use of technology to support pupils' learning. It has supported a school in the Ecuadorian rainforest as well as other schools in England. Visitors from a school in Sweden and other countries across the world have also benefited from the school's innovative use of technology.
- Teachers who have additional responsibilities make regular checks on learning, and help their colleagues to improve their teaching. They make a commendable and important contribution to the school. For example, improvements in the provision of physical education have resulted in a significant increase in participation in sports.
- Teachers plan experiences which engage pupils' interests and help them build on their skills. Creativity is encouraged in most topics, and good use is made of the outdoor environment including the Forest school to extend the pupils' learning experiences. Pupils say they particularly enjoy these 'challenge experiences,' where different topics are linked together. In addition, pupils engage in a wide range of sporting, cultural and academic activities in the after-school clubs. As such the curriculum makes a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In this school, the pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils. The school

works well with families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This is evidence of the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity.

- Pupils are given many opportunities to develop their sporting skills, through after-school clubs, specialist teaching and regular competitions with other schools. The sports fund is well targeted in promoting a strong sense of health and well-being amongst the pupils, including in the breakfast and after-school clubs. Consequently more pupils take part in competitive sport.
- Effective links have been made with the on-site pre-school and the local secondary school. This enables a smooth transition for the pupils, and ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in education.
- The school commissions help from the local authority when needed. Support has been provided to ensure that teachers make reliable assessments of how well the pupils are doing, in the Reception class, in Year 2 and Year 6. As a result, the school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors play a full and active role in supporting the school. They have well informed views which help them to hold the school to account. They know how well pupils are doing compared to national performance, and the reasons why progress is accelerating. They use their wide range of skills and expertise to good use, and have made sure that the right people are appointed to important positions within the school. Pay awards are carefully checked to ensure that these reflect outstanding performance. Governors also ensure that finances are appropriately targeted so, for example, pupils funded through the pupil premium get the support they need to succeed and play a full part in school life. Equally, they understand how the sports premium is used to open up new opportunities for pupils to take part in clubs and competitions. They have a good oversight of how the school is improving the quality of the teaching and accelerating progress. Regular opportunities to take part in training have helped them to take on specific roles and responsibilities. They make sure that safeguarding and other statutory requirements are met and reflect best practice.

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	136441
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	441189

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shawn Collom
Principal	Nathan Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01371 822330
Fax number	none
Email address	admin@flitchgreen.net

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