

Finlay Community School

Finlay Road, Gloucester, GL4 6TR

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good and effective provision in the Reception class helps pupils to settle quickly and make good progress, especially in their personal and social skills.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from low starting points and attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. All groups of pupils, including those who are disabled, have special needs or are disadvantaged, make equally good progress.
- Teaching is good because teachers plan lessons, based on pupils' interests, which excite them and help them to learn.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because it is well managed and pupils have good attitudes to learning. Pupils feel safe and are well cared for.
- The imaginative curriculum provides broad and varied learning experiences including in sport, arts, music. A programme of assemblies on 'values' contributes effectively to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The headteacher and members of the governing body have accurately identified and taken rapid action to address priorities identified for improvement.
- Senior leaders have successfully reversed the recent decline in achievement and ensured that teaching is consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pace of learning slows down when teaching provides activities which are not matched closely enough to the needs and abilities of pupils, especially the most able.
- Rates of progress in writing are not as rapid as in reading and mathematics. Pupils are not given opportunities for extended writing across subjects.
- Teachers responsible for subjects do not always have the expertise to analyse information related to pupils' achievement in detail to enable them to identify weaknesses and take appropriate action.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons or part lessons. Four were observed jointly with the senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils and inspectors also heard individual pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors and members of the governing body, headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to a representative from the local authority and a group of parents. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to be considered. Twenty one staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress. The inspectors looked at documentation related to school improvement, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Shahnaz Maqsood, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Finlay Community School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About 20% of pupils come from a range of ethnic groups, with the biggest group being any other mixed background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- About two thirds of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- The school offers a breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body.
- There is a children's centre and an adult learning resource unit known as the 'Hub'.
- The school is supported by the Learning Community Partnership which is comprised of Gloucester City Deanery, Gloucester Communities and the University of Gloucestershire.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed five teachers and an assistant headteacher.
- Children attend the early years Reception class full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum for expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to further raise standards and rates of pupils' progress, by:
 - evaluating precisely pupils' strengths, weaknesses and progress in lessons
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise writing at length in a wide range of subjects and topics
 - ensuring that teachers plan tasks and activities that take into account the different abilities of the pupils in their class, particularly the most able.
- Ensure that subject leaders fully contribute to school improvement by taking responsibility for the robust monitoring of the quality of pupils' work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is fully committed to school improvement; she is well supported by the recently appointed assistant headteacher. They have accurately identified what needs to be done to raise achievement and to improve teaching further.
- Senior leaders regularly monitor pupils' progress, including the different groups, deploying good support where underachievement is identified. Through this, the leaders make sure there is equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Although subject leaders are gaining in confidence, they still rely on senior leaders to analyse data on pupils' attainment and progress and are not able to identify some weaknesses which means they are not able to fully contribute to securing school improvements.
- A range of strategies are used to find out about the quality of teaching, such as lesson observations, book checks and learning walks. Setting targets for teachers is rigorous and is used well to support their professional development. It is having a good impact on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils enjoy their learning because the curriculum is designed to meet their particular needs. The extra-curricular activities such as street dance, samba drumming and many other clubs enhance their learning. The school promotes social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very effectively through assemblies and lessons which also raises pupils' awareness of British values. For example, pupils volunteer for litter picking and at an old people's home. Residents of the home regularly visit the school to attend parties arranged by the pupils. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has used additional sports funding to improve the skills of teachers and pupils through employing expert coaches from a local secondary school. This has resulted in the increased participation of the pupils in a range of varied sports and competitive games.
- The support provided by the local authority in training staff and strengthening the leadership team has been beneficial to the school.
- The school has established good links with parents. The 'Hub', an adult learning facility based in the school, is well used by parents who regularly attend coffee mornings and workshops organised by the school. During the inspection, a number of parents came in especially to meet the inspectors, to speak about the school. They agreed with inspectors that the pupils achieve and behave well at the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, such as the quality of teaching, and are fully involved in plans for improvement. They hold the school to account effectively and provide appropriate levels of challenge and support. The governors work closely with the school to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.
 - Governors ensure that the additional pupil premium funding is spent wisely to raise the achievement of all eligible pupils. Other finances are also well managed, including teachers' pay, which is closely linked to improvement in pupils' performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All pupils display consistently positive attitudes to learning which have a positive impact on their progress. They conduct themselves well in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They take pride in their work and appearance. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils told inspectors that low-level disruption happens very occasionally. Pupils take on responsibility with enthusiasm, such as being members of the school council or helping out with breakfast club. Inspectors witnessed older pupils showing maturity and sensitivity in dealing with younger children as they helped serve breakfast.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is above average. The school has been effective in reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, including those in the Reception class,

feel safe and well looked after. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when crossing the road or using the internet.

- Pupils understand all types of bullying and told inspectors that bullying and racism are rare. When an incident relating to these occur, the adults in the school take it very seriously and deal with it immediately so that it does not happen again.
- The school has effective systems to support vulnerable pupils to keep them safe. For example, through the family support worker who has formed close links with the families of these pupils and with external agencies.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to give very clear guidance to help pupils understand and to progress quickly.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent, which motivates pupils and benefits learning. Teaching assistants are highly effective, in class and in leading small groups, because they ask questions that challenge and extend the learning of pupils.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout their lessons and give advice and support when required to clarify any misconceptions pupils may have. All pupils have personal targets and are aware of what they have to do to improve.
- Literacy and, in particular, speaking skills are developed well by encouraging pupils to talk about problems in order to share ideas and clarify their thinking before writing anything down. The teaching of reading has improved following changes in the way it is taught. Teachers ensure lessons provide greater emphasis on pupils' understanding of what they are reading.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Basic skills are taught regularly and teachers ensure that they give pupils a range of problems to solve which help to consolidate pupils' skills.
- Teachers mark books regularly and give useful feedback, which helps pupils to improve their work and extend their learning. In all the books seen by inspectors, marking highlighted errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation, which is helping to improve pupils' skills in this area.
- Checking pupils' work revealed that pupils do not always produce long pieces of written work. There is insufficient variation in the styles of writing pupils use. This is hampering their development in this subject.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter Reception with skills and abilities which vary widely. Pupils achieve well throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, so that by the end of Year 6, they reach the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This is evidence of pupils' good progress over time.
- In 2013, standards declined from the previous year in both key stages and were well below age expectations in all subjects. This fall in achievement was due to changes in staffing and a number of pupils presenting significant barriers to learning.
- In 2014, the school put in place a range of successful strategies to improve pupils' progress, particularly in reading. As a result, attainment in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 rose and was broadly in line with national expectations with writing only slightly below. Evidence in pupils' books indicates that rates of progress are beginning to speed up.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 also performed better than the previous year. Standards in writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation rose from being significantly below those found nationally to slightly above in 2014. Attainment in reading and mathematics also improved and was similar to that expected for 11 year olds.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well as result of good provision, focused interventions and in-class support. Disadvantaged pupils' needs are well catered for and they make at least good progress. Gaps in attainment between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils are reducing further for younger pupils. In 2014, the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 performed better than their peers nationally in English and mathematics. They were a term and half behind their classmates in mathematics, two and a half terms behind in writing and just under a term behind in reading.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their starting points due to the well-targeted support they receive.

- In 2013, most pupils did not reach the expected standard in phonics (letters and sounds they make) in Year 1. However, the proportions reaching it are increasing steadily each year. The new plans for teaching phonics introduced this year are already having an impact on raising standards further.
- The rates of progress of the most able pupils are speeding up and a greater proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in 2014 than 2013. However, although progress is good overall, there are still some pupils who do not reach the higher levels because occasionally teachers set work which is too easy which does not enable pupils to achieve as well as they should.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in early years make good progress and make gains in their learning, especially in their personal and social development. The children are very well cared for. Their behaviour is outstanding because staff makes their expectations very clear. As a result, pupils respect rules and develop very positive relationships with staff and one another.
- The early years provision is led and managed well and the curriculum is carefully thought out to meet the needs of the children. A moving example of the good development of pupils' personal and social skills was seen in the large picture of a soldier displayed to commemorate Remembrance Day. Older children with parents in the armed forces talked to Reception children about how they miss them when they are away on duty.
- The classrooms inside and out are exciting and well organised. The children love exploring the different learning areas which effectively stimulate their curiosity.
- Teaching is good, because staff in the early years plan and check on children's learning regularly together. Learning activities are based on what the pupils know and need to learn to move forward. For example, during a phonics lesson, pupils were in three groups. One group was working with the teacher, using phonics knowledge to sound out and spell, another was hunting for letters and sounding out, whilst the third group was digging for pictures and then guessing the sound of the first letter. All pupils made good progress and enjoyed themselves during this activity.

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	135727
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	444286

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Shorrocks
Headteacher	Naomi Briner
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 February 2014
Telephone number	01452 530310
Fax number	01452 530311
Email address	admin@finlay.gloucs.sch.uk

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