

Findern Primary School

Buckford Lane, Findern, Derby, DE65 6AR

Inspection dates 21–22 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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.

- Leaders, including governors, have taken effective action to rapidly improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher has quickly created an effective leadership team amongst staff and strengthened links with parents.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils value their small school community and all get on well together. They enjoy their learning because of the well-planned activities they experience.
- Pupils are kept very safe while in school and say that the school gives them good guidance on how to stay safe.
- Teaching is good. Teachers motivate pupils by setting them interesting tasks so that they learn well. They establish very good relationships with pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and achieve above average standards by the time they leave.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key values, such as respect and tolerance, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Early years provision is good. Children in the Reception class make good progress because teaching is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set a suitable level of challenge for pupils to work towards when writing in order to make the best possible progress.
- On occasion, tasks given to the least-able pupils are not well enough matched to their ability, and these pupils have to rely too much on adults to help them.
- The monitoring role of subject leaders and governors is not fully established. Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects. Governors are not as systematic in their monitoring as they could be and are sometimes too reliant on reports from the headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons and some short sessions where small groups were being taught. Six observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In all, eight members of staff were seen teaching.
- The inspector looked at samples of work in a range of pupils' books, spoke to pupils about their work during lessons and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body, leaders and staff. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of written comments received from parents and 55 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke to parents and a member of the local community during the inspection.
- The inspector analysed the response from 17 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, evidence of the monitoring of teaching and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British and 'Other White' backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well below average. This funding is provided for pupils who are, or have been, eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years provision comprises a Reception class, which children attend full time.
- There is a privately-run breakfast club which uses part of the school's accommodation. It is not managed by the school's governing body and is subject to separate inspection.
- The school provides 'Forest School' provision for all pupils.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced leadership and governance changes. The current headteacher took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, specifically in writing, and raise achievement further by making sure teachers:
 - consistently provide pupils with a suitable level of challenge to work towards in all writing activities so that they develop their writing skills more quickly
 - give the least-able pupils work that enables them to make good progress so that they do not rely on adults to help them.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing further the monitoring role of subject leaders and governors by ensuring:
 - subject leaders play a greater part in the school's improvement by checking the quality of teaching in their subjects
 - governors' checks of the effectiveness of the school's work are more systematic and less reliant on reports from the headteacher.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have correctly identified the key priorities needed to move the school forward. Their strong focus on improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement has resulted in rapid improvement. Leaders have created a culture where good teaching and good behaviour have flourished and have had a positive impact on teachers' performance and pupils' well-being and achievement. A very positive response to the questionnaire completed by staff indicates that they feel well supported by the school's leadership.
- The headteacher provides drive and determination and leads the school's programme of improvement well. The headteacher knows how well the school is doing and what she wants staff and pupils to achieve. In a relatively short space of time, she has established effective systems for checking how well staff and pupils are performing. Staff receive the training they need to do their jobs well, and this is leading to raised achievement. For example, standards in phonics (the sounds that letters make) are rising because of a consistent approach to teaching that has been established across the school. Behaviour at lunchtimes has improved due to good use of resources and better expertise by lunchtime staff.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning systematically. All staff are involved in identifying what pupils should learn next and leaders ensure teachers' assessments are accurate. More experienced members of staff provide good guidance for those who are less experienced.
- Subject leaders' roles are developing well but they are not yet fully involved in checking the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- The local authority provides good support and training for staff and governors to aid the school's improvement. This support is used well by leaders to strengthen leadership and teaching skills.
- Leaders, including in the early years, check the progress pupils make systematically so that they quickly identify those in danger of falling behind. The school is committed to ensuring all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. For example, leaders and staff have made concerted efforts to ensure disadvantaged pupils and the most-able pupils reach their full potential.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding effectively to provide additional resources and staffing to help eligible pupils to achieve as well as their classmates. This has led to better personal development and academic achievement for pupils who are eligible for this support. The school's information shows that gaps in their performance, relative to their classmates, are closing.
- The well-balanced curriculum provides many interesting activities which pupils enjoy. Trips and visitors to the school are used to widen pupils' experiences and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils take part in national music performances and develop their understanding of others through the interesting topic work the school provides and its links with the local community. Pupils engage keenly in the Forest School activities, which staff use effectively to develop pupils' social skills and motivate learning in a range of subjects.
- The key values of respect and tolerance permeate the school's work. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Leaders make sure the curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and festivals, which promotes their understanding of those from different backgrounds well. They study key events in British history and leading British figures and institutions, such as the Houses of Parliament.
- The primary sports funding is used effectively to strengthen teachers' skills in teaching physical education lessons and to increase pupils' participation in, and enjoyment of, sport. As a result, more pupils than previously are involved in physical activity, especially at lunchtimes. This has had a positive impact on behaviour and the development of pupils' sports skills.
- There are extensive opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning and participate in the school's activities. The school organises workshops to aid parents' understanding of the

curriculum. Parents' regular attendance at drama and music performances and school lunches helps them to share their children's experiences of school. The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, are supportive of the school's work.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have maintained a strong focus on improvement during a time of several changes in personnel. They provide good induction for those who are new to the governing body to ensure that all governors are aware of their responsibilities. They undergo relevant training to develop their skills. Governors know how well the school is doing and visit frequently. They ask pertinent questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and check the amount of progress pupils make. However, governors sometimes rely too heavily on the reports they get from school leaders, and their monitoring of the work of the school is not sufficiently systematic and independent. Governors know how good teaching is and how well it is leading to good achievement, and make sure this informs decisions about teachers' pay. They set targets for the headteacher to work towards and know how the performance of staff is checked. Governors support positively the promotion of British values and undergo training to ensure they contribute effectively to this aspect of the school's work. They, together with school leaders, ensure that arrangements to keep pupils safe meet statutory requirements and are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. From the time they start school in the Reception class, pupils develop positive attitudes to their learning which contribute strongly to the amount of progress they make. They are attentive in lessons and concentrate well. They say they enjoy all that the school offers, especially their involvement in the Forest School, which they speak of with great enthusiasm.
- Pupils value their small school community and say that everyone gets on well together. They recognise how good behaviour helps the school to run smoothly and are fully aware of the school's rules. They have a strong sense of right and wrong because this is instilled in them by staff and by the school's key values.
- Pupils understand the importance of principles such as respect and tolerance well. They see the fairness of voting to become a member of the school council or when applying to be one of the school's anti-bullying ambassadors. They take it in turns to share resources and listen to the views of others. They recognise that people come from a range of faiths and backgrounds that may be different to their own. One pupil commented, 'Even if people are different, we treat everyone the same.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff receive the training they need to keep pupils safe and the school ensures its safeguarding systems and policies are consistently applied by all staff. Pupils receive good guidance on how to stay safe in assemblies, lessons and through links with the local police force.
- Pupils say they feel safe because their school provides a secure and welcoming environment. They are confident that staff will deal with any concerns they may have, including when moving to a larger secondary school. They contribute to discussions about how the school can better help pupils to express any problems they might have, for example by suggesting the school provides a 'worry box'.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, including those that arise when using technology. They say bullying is rare but if any incidents do arise they are sorted by staff. Pupils take their roles as 'anti-bullying ambassadors' very seriously and give guidance about how to deal with any bullying that might occur to their classmates. They receive training and regularly talk about these and similar issues in assemblies.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers, including in the early years, motivate pupils so that they want to learn very well. They present topics in interesting ways so that pupils want to find out more. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of the behaviour and of the standards they believe pupils are capable of achieving. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do well in reading because the improvements the school has made to the way this subject is taught are speeding up the progress they make. The teaching of phonics is done very effectively and this helps pupils to tackle new words. Teachers' own evident enjoyment of reading inspires a good response to stories and poems. Teachers often use popular tales to motivate writing. For example, during the inspection, pupils in the Year 5 and Year 6 class developed their skills in persuasive writing by structuring a letter addressed to Bilbo Baggins from the book *The Hobbit*.
- Staff teach handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar well and make sure pupils use these skills whenever they write. They give pupils a varied range of subjects to write about and interesting starting points. For example, work in the Forest School inspired well-written and descriptive stories about 'mud monsters'. The best teaching sets pupils a suitable level of challenge to work towards when they write so that pupils make good gains in their learning. This practice is not sufficiently evident across the school as a whole, however, to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress in developing their writing skills at all times.
- In mathematics, teachers provide pupils with work that is well matched to their ability and set a high level of challenge for the most-able pupils. Teachers are adept at finding interesting ways for pupils to consolidate and apply their skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 extended their study of the Romans by using Roman numerals in their mathematics work.
- Teachers correct pupils' misunderstanding systematically. They expect pupils to be able to explain their answers and to share ideas with each other. All teachers mark work in pupils' books in a similar fashion so that pupils receive consistent guidance on how well they are doing and how to improve.
- Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning. Their work with pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, has a positive impact on developing pupils' confidence and the acquisition of basic skills.
- Sometimes, staff do not provide suitable tasks for the least-able pupils or help them to understand how to tackle their work. As a result, they sometimes become 'stuck' and are too reliant upon an adult to help them. On these occasions, these pupils do not always make as much progress as they could.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. The good start they make in the early years is now being built upon strongly as pupils move through the school. Consequently their attainment is rising.
- The majority of pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of the consistently good teaching they receive. Achievement is now good, and is rapidly improving across the school. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve better results than last year at both the expected and higher levels. Although this improvement began during 2014, there was insufficient time for it to have a significant impact on the end of Year 6 results last year. Whilst pupils reached the standards expected for their age, the proportion making more than the expected progress in reading and writing was below average.
- The biggest improvement is in writing, due to the school's drive to address the previous underachievement in this subject. Teachers employ a consistent approach when teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar and this ensures pupils spell correctly and make good use of punctuation in

their writing. The introduction of a whole-school approach to handwriting encourages pupils to take pride in their work and present their writing legibly. Even so, some teachers do not consistently set a suitable level of challenge for pupils to work towards when writing, and the school recognises that there is work to be done before all pupils make the best possible progress in this subject.

- Pupils achieve well in reading because leaders have raised the profile of reading throughout the school. Pupils select their reading material from stimulating and well-written texts and read frequently. Pupils are developing good skills in comprehension and in reading for a wide range of purposes.
- The most-able pupils now achieve well. In 2014, the proportion who achieved the higher levels in reading, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar improved markedly from the previous year. The school's information and work in books show that an even greater proportion are on track to achieve the higher levels this year, with the biggest improvement in writing. These pupils are doing well because they are given the right level of work in lessons that challenges them to do their very best.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive the right level of help to do well and leaders check their progress frequently. The school makes good use of outside expertise to provide pupils who need it with additional support. There are good links with secondary schools to ease the transition of these pupils to the next stage of their education.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to aid the personal and academic achievement of eligible pupils. Because of the small numbers involved, it is not possible to comment on these pupils' attainment relative to their school or national peers in 2014 without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, the school's information shows that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make good progress. Any gaps in their knowledge and understanding and in their performance relative to other pupils are closing.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Leaders and staff forge strong links with pre-school providers and parents, leading to very good arrangements for children when they start in the Reception class. The progress children make is carefully checked. Leaders ensure learning builds effectively upon what children already know and can do.
- Behaviour is good and children have positive attitudes to their learning. Children are keen to participate in the exciting tasks on offer and share resources well. The setting's very good systems nurture children's confidence and keep them safe whilst they are in school. Staff expect children to take on responsibility for the tasks they choose to do. As a result, children are motivated and keen to tackle tasks across all areas of learning.
- Teaching is good. Adults make good use of a wide range of resources, both indoors and outside, to inspire learning. They structure tasks well and ask suitable questions to extend children's understanding and provide extra challenge. They use assessment systems very effectively to track children's progress and to ensure parents are aware of, and able to share, their children's achievements.
- Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Improvements made by leaders and staff have ensured that achievement is on an upward trend. In 2014, an above average proportion of children reached a good level of development and this level of achievement is set to continue. Consequently, children are well prepared for the learning they will encounter in Year 1.

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	112551
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	462021

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	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shally Saleri-Palmer
Headteacher	Emma Titchener
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2013
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