

Forches Cross Community Primary School

Forches Avenue, Barnstaple, EX32 8EF

Inspection dates 9–10 June 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

- The passion of the headteacher, to ensure that every pupil should have the chance to reach their potential, is transmitted to leaders at all levels. This has led to improvements in teaching and in rates of progress in all year groups.
- Achievement has improved markedly since the previous inspection, especially at Key Stage 1. The progress of Key Stage 2 pupils was excellent in 2014 and Year 6 pupils in 2015 are progressing at similarly rapid rates.
- In 2015, pupils are expected to attain in line with national averages at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve in line with national averages. A growing proportion of pupils are on track to attain better than average standards at Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is consistently at least good in all years. Leaders have made changes where needed to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1. This has resulted in more rapid rates of progress for all groups of pupils.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and this allows them to both challenge and support school leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, as is their behaviour around school, and most love learning. The school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has introduced the new National Curriculum in creative ways. A wide range of visits often provide exciting beginnings to topics. Stimulating follow-up lessons then provide rich opportunities for learning in other subjects.
- Early years provision is good and it is well led. Pupils make good progress across both Nursery and Reception and gain skills that prepare them well for Key Stage 1.
- The care, support and guidance offered to disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs is excellent. This enables these pupils to make rapid progress.
- Safeguarding of pupils is excellent. Consequently, most pupils say they feel completely safe at school and they are appreciative of the care they receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Marking of pupils' work does not elicit a good enough response from them.
- Partnerships with parents have improved since the last inspection but some parents are still not as involved as they could be in their pupils' learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, or parts of lessons, all jointly with the headteacher or the head of teaching and learning. The inspection team also observed small groups pupils working with teaching assistants.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, scrutinised pupils' work in their books and spoke informally to pupils at break and at lunchtime.
- Documents relating to pupils' current attainment and progress were examined, along with other documentation that included the leaders' monitoring of the school's work and minutes of governing body meetings.
- There were only two responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), which was not enough for inspectors to take account of them. However, inspectors spoke with 51 parents at the start of school.
- The inspectors also took into consideration 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Garvey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Simms

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Forches Cross Community Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds; few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection the deputy headteacher has left and in his place a head of teaching and learning was appointed in September 2014. In addition, three new teachers have been appointed in Key Stage 1.
- Early years provision is full time for children of Reception age. Nursery children attend in the morning only.
- Pupils are taught in seven classes. Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are taught in discrete age groups. Other classes are taught as mixed-age classes for most of their timetable.
- There is a pre-school on the school's site. This is run and managed by the school's governing body, but is inspected and reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils by:
 - developing communication with parents to a high level so it is sufficient to ensure they are able to support the learning of pupils at home.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that pupils respond fully to all marking comments made about their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The excellent and caring leadership of the headteacher has been paramount in creating a school ethos of high quality care and support in which all pupils can thrive. Leaders at all levels follow this lead. This has led to significant improvements in pupil achievement, in the quality of teaching and in behaviour and safety at the school.
- Following the previous inspection leaders took quick and robust action to improve the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 with notable success. Progress at Key Stage 1 has improved as a result of good teaching.
- Subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility well and they are led by a very effective head of teaching and learning. She has established a professional development programme, tailored to the needs of each member of staff, that has helped to rapidly improve the quality of teaching in the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, know the school very well and as a result can accurately assess its performance and target the school's next steps. Self-evaluation is strong and accurate. Leaders know there is still scope to improve and the capacity for further improvement is strong.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well. Leaders believe that all pupils can achieve well and this belief is borne out, especially at Key Stage 2. Here, due to careful targeting of the pupil premium funding, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is catching up with that of their classmates.
- The new National Curriculum has been adopted skilfully to create exciting learning opportunities. This has supported an acceleration in pupil progress. A visit to the Eden Project, a field trip to Exmoor and a 'pilgrimage' for all pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 to the top of a local hill, are some examples. These visits have taken pupils out of their everyday environment and given them a sense of awe and wonder. The visits have provided opportunities for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and have helped to improve achievement in English, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- The school promotes traditional British values well through assemblies and the wider curriculum. Pupils show tolerance and respect for other religions and those from different social groups.
- Relationships with parents have improved since the previous inspection as a result of a range of initiatives, including the use of an effective family support worker. Attendance has improved as a result. However, there are some families with whom the school finds communication difficult. This means that some parents are not being encouraged to support their children effectively to learn at home.
- The school has used its primary school sports funding well to ensure that pupils take part in a wide range of sports and can compete at a competitive level with other schools
- Support from the local authority has been well received and effective. This support has significantly reduced this year, in step with the school's improvement in all areas.
- Safeguarding in the school meets all statutory requirements; as a result, pupils are kept safe.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is strong. Governors have a good knowledge of the working of the school and this allows the governing body to hold the school to account and to support, or challenge, where necessary. Governors understand the school's performance data well and direct funds to where it is most needed. good example is the way that pupil premium funding was directed after governors and leaders saw that a gap would open in 2014. The gap is on track to close in 2015, due to careful targeting of resources. Governors are aware of how the primary sports funding is used and how this benefits pupils' ability to be competitive in sports. The school is growing in numbers and this will allow governors more freedom to allocate resources in the future. Governors' financial acumen is good. Governors have a clear view of the quality of teaching and manage staff performance well, making sure that teachers' salary progressions are well matched to performance. Governors were involved from the start in improving the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, following the previous inspection. They made astute appointments which have proved very effective in raising standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and it has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils play well together most of the time. Pupils say that this play sometimes spills over into minor disturbances in class and on rare occasions bullying. However, when this happens adults deal with it well.

- Some parents expressed concerns about behaviour, but inspectors did not find this to be typically the case. Behaviour and bullying logs were examined carefully. The number of instances of poor behaviour and bullying had fallen rapidly over time. Longer serving staff, governors and some parents also testified that this was the case. Almost all staff felt that behaviour in the school was good.
- Pupils form good relationships with adults in the school and are courteous and respectful to school staff and to visitors.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are often exemplary and various outside agencies, including the local authority have used the school's safeguarding procedures to demonstrate good practice. However, there are concerns from some parents and a few pupils about occasional disturbances in lessons and thus the safety of pupils is good and not outstanding.
- Pupils appreciate the care and support they receive from adults and say there is always someone to go to if they have problems. Pupils are increasingly capable of regulating their own risks. Though playtimes are boisterous, older pupils lead play and support younger ones well, creating a sociable and welcoming environment
- Forches Cross Community Primary School is a happy community of which pupils are proud. Pupils enjoy learning and want to do well. They are enthusiastic and they work hard in lessons. As a result, attendance has improved over time.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically at least good in all year groups. The quality of teaching has improved, especially in Key Stage 1. This has led to acceleration in the rates of progress of all groups of pupils in the current cohort of Key Stage 1 pupils.
- Teachers are supported by able teaching assistants and volunteers. All adults work in cohesive teams to support any pupil who may be in danger of falling behind in their learning. At Key Stage 2, teaching is often excellent and this has led to a much greater than expected proportion of pupils making rapid progress in each of mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils respond well to the frequent opportunities to work collaboratively in lessons. They typically get on well with each other and discussions allow them to share ideas and learn more effectively.
- Teaching is also good outside of the core subjects. For example, in a Year 6 French lesson, pupils were encouraged to speak to a range of partners following skilful modelling of French greetings by the teacher. Teachers' skills have improved due to appropriate and targeted professional development by leaders, a major factor in the improvement of teaching across the school.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and pupils say that they appreciate the high levels of care and support they receive. Thus the school helps pupils to develop into mature youngsters who behave well and are very capable of coping with the challenges of secondary school. Year 6 pupils said they feel well-prepared for their transfer to secondary school, although they say they will be sad to leave Forches Cross!
- The wide range of educational visits has given pupils experiences outside of the usual and teachers have used these visits cleverly, encouraging pupils to explore different and interesting ways of writing. In consequence, attainment in writing, by the end of Year 6, has improved and is now above average.
- Classrooms are conducive to good learning. They are rich in numeracy and literacy and pupils are encouraged to add their own examples and comments to encourage others. This supports the good teaching of reading and, as a consequence, pupils read widely.
- Teachers give helpful advice to pupils through their diligent marking of pupils' work in books. However, too often the pupils' responses to their teacher's marking lack depth and are too brief. Thus pupils do not use the good comments well enough to extend what they have learned, limiting their understanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the early years provision with skills that are well below those typical for their age. This is especially the case in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. They then progress well as they move through the school. Pupils leave in Year 6, in each of the last three years, with broadly average attainment in reading and in mathematics. Attainment in writing improved to be above average in 2014.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly since the previous inspection, due to the

introduction of new teachers and new leadership. Data show that the current cohort of Year 2 pupils will achieve close to national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the first time and that standards in the phonics (letters and their sounds) screening check will also be at the national average.

- In 2014, validated assessment information shows that the progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 was more rapid than expected for all groups of pupils and in every subject. School monitoring shows that pupils in the current Year 6 are progressing at least as rapidly as did pupils in 2014.
- Pupils use the library regularly and read widely and often. The introduction of appropriate reading schemes has boosted progress in reading, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Progress in each year group is good due to good teaching and good monitoring of pupils' progress by leaders.
- The very small numbers of most-able pupils made expected progress in 2014.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was close to that of their classmates, but was three terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own data show that gaps are closing rapidly and these pupils are on track to attain similar standards to those of other pupils nationally in 2015. Across the school, disadvantaged pupils are making more rapid progress than other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make more rapid progress than most of their peers due to the very high levels of care and support provided by all adults.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress through Nursery and Reception due to good teaching and skilled support from teaching assistants. Consequently, children join Key Stage 1 well equipped to embark upon the next phase of their learning.
- Good teaching holds the attention of children. In a Nursery class, pupils were asked to use words to describe what was happening as the teacher squeezed a tea bag, a lemon and a clove of garlic using appropriate kitchen utensils. Children watched intently and readily contributed phrases like 'look, it's coming out of the end', as the teacher squeezed the garlic press.
- Most children join with literacy skills that are often much lower than those typical for their age. There are many and varied opportunities for speaking, reading and writing, which allow children to develop their language skills quickly. For example, adults in Reception were seen guiding children to develop their own stories of what happened from the 'evidence' of a crashed scooter. Children responded eagerly, writing and telling their imaginative versions of events.
- Assessment of children is regular and accurate. Careful records are kept which allow adults to ensure that individual needs are met, meaning that all groups of children learn well. Good leadership and management ensure that all teaching assistants are deployed effectively and support the children's learning appropriately, enabling all abilities to progress well.
- Reception children have to go through the Nursery to use the good outdoor provision. However, careful timetabling of activities allows children to move without disturbance to the Nursery children's learning.
- The care given to children in the early years provision is unstinting and of a very high level. Thus children are kept very safe. Adults routinely model excellent social behaviour and the children learn from them quickly and behave very well, leading to a harmonious and a happy atmosphere in which children can play and learn.

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	113127
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	462525

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paula Stein
Headteacher	Paul Wisken
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 October 2013
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