

Fingringhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Fingringhoe, Colchester C05 7BN

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until recently, leaders have not taken effective actions to bring about improvements at a fast enough pace.
- Changes in the teaching staff profile have led to inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school historically.
- Standards in the early years and Key Stage 1 have not been high enough. Attainment in writing has lagged behind that in reading and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not plan work that challenges pupils sufficiently. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils.
- The quality of pupils' work and teachers' marking and feedback is inconsistent across subjects. Not all teachers have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation.
- The provision for children in the early years class does not ensure that they learn as well as they should. This is especially the case when children are working independently, and in the outside area.
- Some subject leaders do not yet have the skills and confidence to promote good learning across the school in their subject area.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher is providing strong and effective leadership. She is targeting the most urgent priorities and as a result there have been rapid improvements recently. The school is well placed to improve further.
- Pupils' progress is increasing across the school. This includes that of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave well.
- The caring ethos of the school ensures that pupils are very well looked after.
- The governing body, led by a new chair, knows the school well and is providing appropriate challenge.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school, so that it is all at least good, by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan activities that build on pupils' prior learning so that any gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge are tackled successfully and the most-able pupils are challenged at the right level.
 - teachers' marking in all subjects, particularly those other than English and mathematics, gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation and quality of work in all subjects and do not accept work that is presented in an untidy manner.

- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - there are more and improved resources to support children's learning outside the classroom
 - teachers plan more opportunities for children to learn outside the classroom
 - the activities planned for children always engage them in learning when they are working independently, and that adults check more regularly to ensure that this is the case to move their learning on more effectively.

- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously checking on the quality of teaching and learning and providing teachers with precise feedback on their practice to help them to improve
 - developing the role of other leaders so that responsibilities are distributed evenly and everyone is involved with driving improvements to teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Progress since the last inspection has not been as rapid or sustained as it should have been. It has been hindered by a number of changes in staffing, which because Fingringhoe is a small school, have had a significant impact on the speed of improvement. The previous headteacher left the school at the end of the summer term.
- Until recently, leaders had an inaccurate view of the quality of teaching across the school, judging this to be better than it actually was. Together with the changes in teaching staff, this led to pupils experiencing inconsistency in the quality of teaching they received in their journey through the school.
- The local authority has acted decisively and with suitable urgency to remedy this. They have secured the services of an experienced interim headteacher from a neighbouring school. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has accurately identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and quickly prioritised actions to tackle shortcomings.
- The resulting improvement plan is appropriate. The interim headteacher has used information from data analysis, discussions with staff and governors and analysis of pupils' work to construct this. It focuses on the areas which require the greatest improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate.
- The interim headteacher has ensured that checks on the quality of teaching are now regular and accurate. As a result, leaders know where the best teaching is and where it needs to improve. The school works closely with two other local schools. Together with additional support from the local authority, this is providing high-quality professional development for staff.
- The interim headteacher has the support of all staff. One commented on the staff questionnaire: 'The school is now much more learning focused and the staff are extremely supportive.' This view is echoed by parents, the large majority of whom are of the view that the school is well led and managed. A number of parents spoken to commented on the recent improvements that they had observed. Capacity for sustaining improvements made to date and bringing about further improvements is strong.
- Some middle leaders are new in post. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn, but they need further training opportunities to enable them to carry out their roles or fully understand what is expected of them.
- The interim headteacher has ensured that there are robust systems in place to manage the performance of teachers. Teachers are rigorously held to account now for the progress made by pupils in their classes. Appropriate targets have been set for each member of staff, including support staff. Progress is checked through regular meetings, which ensure that any areas of underachievement are swiftly addressed.
- Physical education and sports premium funding is being used creatively to extend opportunities for pupils to participate in physical activity while also enhancing the expertise of staff. Pupils enjoy expert coaching from qualified professionals in a range of sports, including netball and basketball.
- The school has only a small number of disadvantaged pupils. The school closely evaluates the impact that their use of additional funding has on the achievement of the specific individual pupils.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes themes which interest and enthuse pupils of all ages to develop their writing. Pupils have the opportunity to attend a range of after-school clubs, such as art and crafts, Zumba, football, mindfulness, multi-skills and choir. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to learn in an outside classroom. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors to the school, for example at the start of the year, working with artists, children across the school created a stunning British countryside display. Good use of the regular 'challenge afternoons' helps pupils to develop their team-building and thinking skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and beliefs, and show that they understand British values of democracy through their experience of school council elections. They learn about contrasting locations overseas. The school has the international curriculum award and is linked with a school in Ghana.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are experienced and knowledgeable. They carry out their statutory duties conscientiously and with due rigour, particularly those concerning safeguarding.
- Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher and key staff about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Under the leadership of the new chair, they are increasingly holding school leaders to account more effectively by asking challenging questions. Governors are familiar with the school's information and tracking of pupils' achievement and can talk about how well different groups are doing across the school.
- Governors understand that pupils' progress is the main driver in determining whether or not teachers receive pay rises.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. New teachers receive appropriate training, which equips them with the skills and confidence to recognise any sign that a pupil may be at risk of harm, radicalisation or extremism. All staff know their duties and are not afraid to raise any concerns they have about individual pupils. Leaders work in partnership with appropriate external agencies and parents to protect pupils and ensure that all have an equal chance to be happy and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, weaknesses in teaching have meant that pupils have not experienced consistently good teaching in their journey through the school. This has led to gaps in some pupils' knowledge, and variation in their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing has lagged behind that in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of the Reception Year, pupils have not been well enough prepared for Year 1.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching across classes and subjects. It is not always sufficiently robust in every class. Not all teachers plan work that challenges pupils at the right level. This is particularly the case for some of the older and more-able pupils in each of the mixed-age classes.
- Not all teachers insist that pupils' work is well presented and, as a result, there is variation in the quality of work across the school. This is especially so in subjects other than English and mathematics. In these other subjects the quality both of pupils' work and teachers' feedback is less strong. Pupils do not always receive the guidance that they need about their ideas and work to help them improve.
- Overall, however, teaching is improving rapidly. Most teachers have high expectations of both the quality and quantity of pupils' work in English and mathematics. Work in these subjects is marked regularly, adhering to the school marking policy. Pupils respond well to the comments or challenges that their teachers give them and this helps them to improve their work.
- The high number of additional adults are well deployed in all classes. They provide a good standard of support to all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, most pupils with specific learning needs are making at least expected progress, and an increasing proportion are making better than expected progress.
- Many teachers and other adults have good subject knowledge and questioning skills. They use them well to identify where pupils have misconceptions and to address these. Pupils are enthused by, and engaged in, their learning, and rise to the challenge of these teachers' high expectations. For example, pupils in the mixed Year 5 and 6 class enjoyed working on a range of challenges about fractions. The different groups were very well supported because of the good mathematical subject knowledge of the adults involved, which led to them making good progress.
- Classroom environments are bright and cheerful and provide a good balance of support and challenge to pupils. They celebrate pupils' work and clearly show their learning journeys from the starting point of topics.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) has improved. Pupils enjoy reading, and the younger children make good use of their knowledge of phonics to help them to sound out and blend words.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The caring ethos of the school ensures that all children are well cared for and feel well cared for.
- The small size of the school means that pupils all know each other. As one pupil said, 'everyone is kind and we look after each other'. Older children look out for younger children, for example holding their hands as they walk to church.
- Pupils talked confidently about what the school has done to ensure that they are kept safe and recalled learning about how to keep safe online and about 'stranger danger'.
- Pupils spoken to said they felt safe in school and in the playground. They could not recall any incidents of bullying. They showed an awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber, physical and verbal and were confident that if bullying did happen, then their teachers or other adults would sort it out.
- Attendance is above average and reflects the fact that pupils enjoy coming to school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes, good conduct and impeccable manners make a strong contribution to the welcome they give to visitors, and the good progress they are currently making in their lessons.
- Pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school, when coming in from lunch break or playtime, or going to and from collective worship. They behave well at all times, including when eating lunch.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. They show tolerance and understanding of the very small number of pupils who have difficulty in regulating their own behaviour and understand that these pupils need extra help in order to behave well.
- The school carefully records any instances of poor behaviour, but these are few and far between.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour management system. They know and can explain what happens if behaviour slips. Poor behaviour is rare, however, and responses from the staff questionnaire and Parent View support the view that good behaviour is the norm.

Outcomes for pupils require improvement

- Some pupils have not made the accelerated progress that they need to make in order to catch up with national expectations. The school's performance information indicates that the proportion of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort who are on track to meet age-related expectations will be lower than in the previous two years.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in both 2014 and 2015, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing was lower than for reading and mathematics and below national outcomes for writing. This was largely because boys' achievement in writing lagged considerably behind that of girls.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. In both 2014 and 2015, the proportions of pupils who reached the expected 'good level of development' at the end of the Reception Year were below national expectations. Boys fared particularly poorly, especially in writing.
- School information and that collected during the inspection support the view that as a result of improvements to the early years, the proportion on track to reach the expected standard this year will be much higher and is likely to be above that seen nationally. Phonics outcomes show a three-year decline and were below the national standard in both 2014 and 2015. However, stronger and better organisation of phonics teaching is leading to improvements and the proportion of pupils expected to reach the expected standard in 2016 is predicted to be above that expected.
- In Key Stage 1, this year, work in books and school tracking information confirm that the proportions on track to meet age-related expectations in writing are much higher. Boys and girls are doing equally well.

The small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in both cohorts mean that it is not sensible to compare their attainment with that of other pupils.

- There have been very small numbers in Year 6 cohorts over the last few years. Only five pupils sat the national tests in 2015, and only four in 2014. These numbers mean that very little statistical significance can be given to them. Overall, the attainment of these pupils has been in line with or above that of pupils nationally. The small numbers also mean that it is not valid to look at the differences between different groups. There were no disadvantaged pupils in either of these cohorts.
- The school's tracking information and the work seen in pupils' books confirm that most pupils currently in the school have been making good progress since the start of the year.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Historically, the proportions of children achieving expected levels at the end of the Reception Year have been below those typical nationally, and not enough children have been ready to start Year 1.
- The school has carried out baseline assessment for this year's cohort in Reception. This shows that the starting points of around a third of the children were below what is typical for their age, whilst others were broadly in line.
- Improvements made since the start of the year by the new early years teacher are enabling most children to make appropriate progress. Adults know the children very well and plan activities that are well suited to their individual needs, whether in a one-to-one situation or when working with groups. However, opportunities to probe and extend children's learning are lost during the activities that they select for themselves. This is because the activities are not always pitched at the right level and because adults do not check regularly enough or make appropriate interventions to take children's learning to the next level.
- The outdoor environment is underdeveloped. There is currently limited outdoor equipment and there are very few opportunities for children to develop their skills, for example, in number and writing, while they are outside.
- The behaviour of children in the Reception class mirrors that seen in the rest of the school. Children listen to instructions, take turns and share willingly with each other. Adults ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. Children understand safety routines. For example, they know that they are required to wash their hands before eating and hold the hand of an older pupil when walking to church.

School details

Unique reference number	115139
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10001931

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Victoria Martin
Headteacher	Jane Stalham
Telephone number	01206 729266
Website	www.fingringhoe.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@fingringhoe.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 December 2013

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This funding is for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets 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.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a number of new staff appointed to the school.
- The school is currently led by an interim headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part lessons. All were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher
- A range of work in pupils' books was scrutinised. This included a special focus on science.
- Discussions were held with school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector talked to pupils about the school's work, listened to some pupils read and talked to them about books that they enjoy.
- Various aspects of the school's work were observed and the inspector considered a range of policies and documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the school improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, safeguarding policies, and behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector observed pupils in collective worship in the nearby church.
- A case study of the school's work to support a vulnerable pupil was considered.
- Account was taken of 42 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector also spoke to parents as they were delivering their children to school and received a letter from one parent.
- The questionnaire responses received from 19 staff were also considered.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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