

Finberry Primary School

Avocet Way, Finberry, Ashford TN25 7GS

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school due to the effective partnership between leaders from both the school and The Stour Academy Trust.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher share a clear vision and determination to promote the achievement and well-being of all pupils. They have created a positive ethos and culture of learning throughout the school.
- Governors and officers from the trust have enabled successful recruitment, effective training, and retention of high-quality staff. This has led to high-quality leadership and a more stable workforce that is keen to refine and improve its practice.
- Staff and pupils benefit from the expertise and shared opportunities available through the collaboration with other schools in the trust.
- Teachers and teaching assistants show secure subject knowledge and use questions to encourage pupils to explain their thinking.
- There are some inconsistencies in teaching, and consequently not all pupils are challenged enough to do their best, particularly the most able pupils.
- Leaders are ambitious for the school and its pupils. They make frequent checks on the progress that pupils make. They ensure that effective interventions are in place for pupils who need extra help to catch up.
- The curriculum is exciting, creative and carefully planned. It is enhanced by a rich programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Children make a good start in the early years, particularly in the Nursery.
- Pupils throughout the school are making good progress. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have improved considerably. Some pupils in key stage 2 who arrived mid-way through their primary schooling are making up the gaps in their learning quickly.
- Pupils' achievement is not as strong in mathematics as it is in reading and writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Leaders know their pupils well. Strong relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel secure and help to promote their personal development well.
- The higher-than-average number of pupils who join the school part way through their schooling settle quickly and are integrated well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' attendance is just below national levels.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by making sure that teachers challenge pupils, particularly the most able pupils, to think deeply to consolidate their learning.
- Further improve pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Improve pupils' attendance to at least national levels.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is rapidly improving. The Stour Academy Trust opened the school at short notice in September 2015, based in temporary accommodation in Ashford. After a rather turbulent start, the school moved to a new school building in September 2017 under the leadership of the current headteacher. Ably supported by the assistant headteacher, the headteacher has successfully created a culture of ambition with an inclusive and nurturing ethos.
- The trust gives effective support and challenge to the school's leaders. The deputy chief executive officer (CEO) has worked particularly closely with school leaders during the recent phase of rapid school growth. Trust leaders have successfully recruited, developed and retained high-quality school leaders, teachers and other staff. Close collaboration with other schools in the trust has enabled leaders and teachers to improve their skills further. Staffing is now more stable.
- School and trust leaders at all levels share an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school, as well as those aspects of the school which could be even better. This has led to helpful bespoke training and support. The impact of this can be seen in the improvements in the quality of teaching and the consistent approaches across the school.
- Staff feel well supported and appreciate the range of training and professional development opportunities available within the trust. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are particularly well supported. Senior and trust leaders hold teachers firmly to account for pupils' progress. Any weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning are picked up quickly through leaders' rigorous checks on pupils' progress, and precise training is provided.
- Senior leaders show a detailed knowledge of the various needs of pupils in different classes, and of what could be done to further support or challenge the pupils. Throughout the school, staff are hardworking and committed to ensuring that pupils thrive, feel safe and achieve well. Pupils and staff are proud to belong to the school.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. Leaders ensure that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive effective support and challenge. Accurate identification of pupils' individual needs means that pupils are well supported in their academic learning and personal development. Similarly, disadvantaged pupils receive high-quality support to help them achieve well.
- Leaders ensure that pupils experience a rich and stimulating curriculum. Topics are skilfully planned to capture pupils' imagination and develop their knowledge and understanding through a range of subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils were learning about the Second World War through their reading book, studying sources from the time, including ration books, and devising the circuitry for an Andersen shelter. They practised code breaking and painting with feeling to show incarceration in concentration camps. Staff and pupils benefit from the expertise of the trust leader for the curriculum, who has a clear vision for progression in learning through different subjects.

- The curriculum also provides opportunities for pupils to deepen their appreciation of British values. Leaders carefully thread these values, together with spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, successfully throughout the curriculum. Further enrichment is provided by a range of extra-curricular clubs, which are well attended by pupils.
- Additional sports funding is used well. Pupils' participation in sporting and physical activities has increased due to investment in equipment and staff training, which is supported by the physical education leader for the trust. Pupils increasingly take part in competitions with other schools in the trust. School leaders are committed to encouraging healthy living, and family keep-fit activities have been well received.
- Many parents and carers, especially those relatively new to the school, are full of praise for the school's provision. However, some parents feel that the school's communication with families could be strengthened, and have expressed concerns about the previously high turnover of staff.

Governance of the school

- The trust's CEO and deputy CEO visit the school regularly to support the headteacher. Both officers have a secure grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and they deploy resources effectively to ensure continued school improvement.
- The trust's partner schools have given valuable support to the school, working together to establish the school in challenging circumstances and, subsequently, to strengthen the provision.
- The local governing body knows the school well and has an accurate overview of how well the school is doing. Governors make regular visits to the school and provide appropriate feedback to the board of directors. Governors keep a close eye on the school's safeguarding procedures, and they ensure that these are compliant with the latest government guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Governors and staff are appropriately trained and know their responsibilities well. Staff are vigilant and promote an environment where pupils trust, and can talk to, adults.
- Leaders ensure that the school's safeguarding work is supported effectively by the systems and structures that are in place. Staff keep careful records of any concerns they may have about a pupil. Leaders take prompt action to follow these up in an appropriate way.
- Leaders show an impressive depth of knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of vulnerable pupils and their home circumstances. They are alert to local and national risks and ensure that staff are trained accordingly. The school works successfully with external agencies for the benefit of vulnerable pupils, and leaders are tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the support that they need. The family liaison officer offers welcome support for pupils and families who may be facing difficulties.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers create a positive climate for learning. In class, pupils respond well to teachers' clear and high expectations. Learning routines are clearly established. Pupils expect to work hard, and they tackle tasks in class with a sense of purpose. Learning time is rarely wasted. Pupils work well together, supporting each other successfully with their learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge. Additional adults are generally well deployed in lessons. Extra teachers and teaching assistants provide precise support and challenge for individuals and small groups of pupils. Teaching assistants offer skilful questioning to help pupils who require additional support to work things out for themselves. This is promoting better progress for pupils who need to catch up or who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Sometimes, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Recently, teachers have introduced more difficult tasks to consistently extend pupils' learning, and this is beginning to have a positive impact.
- During lessons, teachers check pupils' understanding and respond to their needs, providing additional support or challenge as required. Teachers give immediate feedback to pupils about their learning and are quick to pick up and address any misunderstandings. Teachers also give helpful written feedback to pupils about their work. In accordance with leaders' expectations, teachers indicate where pupils have been successful, and then set out their next learning steps. This consistency makes an effective contribution to pupils' good progress.
- Effective phonics teaching in early years and key stage 1 contributes well to pupils' improved progress in reading and writing. Teachers match reading books to pupils' abilities well, and pupils are confident readers as a result.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to write in a wide range of meaningful contexts and for different purposes. Teaching consistently helps pupils to use a range of sentences and language features to create lively character descriptions. This promotes good progress.
- Teaching in mathematics is also improving. The subject leader is clear about what needs to be done to raise pupils' achievement, for example by promoting more problem-solving and expecting pupils to explain their thinking. These developments are at an early stage and pupils' reasoning skills are not yet embedded. In some classes, pupils' work shows that more rapid progress is being made.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- School staff know their pupils very well. There is a strong focus on pupils' mental health, and staff are alert to any pupils who might need some additional help. School leaders and the parent support adviser work closely with other agencies to help families get the support they need.
- The school's values of respect, truth, compassion and friendship are of high importance to staff and pupils. Pupils speak readily about them and can give everyday examples.
- Pupils are confident to confide in adults in school if they have any problems. They say that bullying is rare but that teachers are good at resolving any issues should they arise.
- The school is highly adept at supporting pupils who join the school after the beginning of the school year or part way through their schooling. Pupils and their families are well supported, and pupils settle quickly. Several parents told inspectors that their children are happier and are making much faster progress since they arrived at Finberry School.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The atmosphere around the school is purposeful and orderly, with pupils settling quickly into their routines. Pupils understand what adults expect of them, and they respond appropriately to any reminders that they may need so that high standards are maintained.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and are polite and respectful. Play and lunchtimes are supervised well with healthy activities available for pupils to take part in.
- Overall attendance is just below the national average. The school provides highly individualised and intensive support for pupils whose attendance is low. Nevertheless, there is a small group of pupils who show persistent absence, despite the best efforts of school leaders.
- Leaders respond appropriately to behaviour which falls below their expectations. However, a few parents expressed concern about some poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and continue to achieve well as they progress through key stage 1. Outcomes in phonics have improved significantly. Provisional results for 2018 show that the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the 2017 national average. This is due to a concerted effort to improve the teaching of phonics. Pupils make proficient use of their phonics when they read and write.
- This year's provisional results show that the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard and greater depth in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 was above that seen nationally in 2017. Outcomes in mathematics are lower. However, in 2017, the school's published key stage 1 results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national average. This was due, in part, to the specific needs of the cohort of pupils who had joined the school when it opened and who experienced turbulence in teaching during their first couple of years. The same cohort, now in Year

4, is making good progress.

- There are no published outcomes for the end of key stage 2. The school's tracking information and work in pupils' books indicate that pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics. None of the pupils in Years 4 to 6 started their schooling at Finberry, all having moved to join the school when it opened, or during the last three years. Some pupils who join the school in classes other than Reception arrive with low starting points. Also, there is a higher proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities in key stage 2 than key stage 1. A combination of strong teaching, effective support and a varied array of interventions is helping pupils with gaps in their learning to catch up rapidly.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress over time because their needs are understood and met by leaders, teachers and the other adults who support them.
- The school's own assessment information and work seen in pupils' books show that most disadvantaged pupils make good progress. School leaders acknowledge that they could do even better to help them make up for their typically lower starting points.
- Previously, the most able pupils have not been consistently challenged well enough, especially in mathematics. Changes to teaching are beginning to lead to deeper learning.
- Pupils achieve well across the wider curriculum. They are well motivated by the exciting creative curriculum, and teachers' expectations are as high across all subjects as in English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- The headteacher has oversight for early years and demonstrates a very clear vision. Her expectations are well met in the Nursery, where the quality of interactions between staff and children is high. Children entering the Nursery make rapid progress from their starting points due to highly effective teaching. Appropriate provision for two-year-olds is evident.
- The Nursery and Reception classes provide a safe environment, with well-designed activities designed to promote learning. Children settle quickly into early years because their induction is managed carefully. The success of this preparation was evident during this inspection. Despite it being so early in the academic year, most children engaged confidently and happily with a range of activities, played with and alongside each other, and benefited from adults' reassurance and encouragement.
- The children's journals demonstrate a highly effective partnership between staff and parents of children in the Nursery. The sharing of information helps families build on the learning from school and contributes well to the children's strong progress.
- Most children get off to a good start in early years. Published outcomes for 2017 show that the proportion of children that achieved a good level of development was above national levels. There was no Nursery at this stage and the children had entered Reception with starting points below those typical for their age. The results represent good progress. Provisional outcomes for 2018, and the impressive development of children's writing seen in last year's books, show that these high standards have been

maintained.

- There are currently some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Reception Year, but adult-led activities are generally well planned to engage and enthuse children, and they promote learning well. Effective questioning by additional staff is used to probe the reasoning behind children's answers, which helps their learning.
- Children learn how to keep themselves safe in early years. Staff ensure that children learn routines quickly, such as tidying away play equipment and following adults' instructions.
- Parents are typically positive about the early years provision. They feel well informed about their children's progress and enjoy contributing to their children's ongoing assessment.

School details

Unique reference number	141881
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10053412

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of the local governing body	Tony Wilde
Headteacher	Stella Scharinger
Telephone number	01233 622 686
Website	www.finberryprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	finberry@stouracademytrust.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Stour Academy Trust. It opened in September 2015 in temporary accommodation in Ashford. In September 2017, the school moved into a new building in the growing village of Finberry. Pupils in the lower year groups are now mainly from the local community.
- The assistant headteacher has been in post since the school opened, and the headteacher joined Finberry from another school in the trust in September 2017.
- The school is currently smaller than the average-sized primary school, but is growing in numbers.
- It has provision for early years children, including two-year-olds, in a Nursery and a Reception class.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than national levels.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has a special resource provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.
- A higher-than-average proportion of pupils join the school during each school year.
- The school hosts six pupils and several staff from Chilmington Green School. This new school, within The Stour Academy Trust, will move into its own accommodation during the year when pupil numbers are high enough. Currently, the Chilmington Green pupils work alongside Finberry pupils. A few teachers from Chilmington Green add to the number of adults supporting learning in some classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 25 lessons across all year groups. Most lessons were visited jointly with school and trust leaders. An inspector also visited an assembly. Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with groups of pupils from Years 1 to 6.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work in lessons, and a further selection of pupils' books was scrutinised. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons, around the school and during breaktimes.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, and a group of teachers. The lead inspector also met with two members of the local governing body, including the chair. Inspectors also met with representatives from The Stour Academies Trust.
- Inspectors met parents at the beginning and end of both days of the inspection. Inspectors took into account the 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter. There were 24 responses to the confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors evaluated a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, attendance information, safeguarding records, information on pupils' progress and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

Theresa Phillips, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Conway

Ofsted Inspector

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