

# Forres Primary School

Stanstead Road, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0RW

## Inspection dates

26–27 February 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has undergone recent rapid expansion from one- to two-form entry across all year groups. As a result, there have been many changes to staffing and school organisation.
- Leaders have not sustained the previously good quality of teaching and learning during these changes.
- Leaders have focused on enhancing the quality of English and mathematics teaching, which has improved but remains uneven across classes. There is not sufficient impact on progress and attainment, which are lower than they should be, especially in writing.
- Teachers' knowledge of subjects taught is not good enough, leading to misconceptions being introduced. The sequence of teaching is often not effective, and pupils' vocabulary is not developed sufficiently.
- Several middle leaders are new to post. They have started supporting colleagues to improve practice in teaching subjects across the wider curriculum but with limited success, thus far, on improving outcomes.
- Safeguarding of pupils is effective but there are no links between historic records and the current electronic system to enable patterns of concerns to be noted.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They work hard in lessons. Staff have positive relationships with the pupils in their care and prioritise ensuring pupils' mental well-being.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school has gained an accredited award for its work with pupils with autism spectrum disorder and is a hub for advising others on good practice in this specialist area.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their education. Strong teaching provides activities that are focused on enabling individuals to make good progress.
- Senior leaders and governors have been proactive in seeking support from the local authority. They have revised their approaches to school improvement and evaluation of the impact of actions accordingly.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently outcomes, by:
  - fully embedding a consistent approach to teaching writing
  - ensuring that teachers' subject knowledge is enhanced so that they are able to plan learning that is carefully sequenced and tackles misconceptions
  - making the most of opportunities for learning subject-specific knowledge and skills in the wider curriculum
  - developing pupils' vocabulary, including applying words in different contexts.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - further developing middle leaders' skills to support and coach colleagues and improve their teaching across the full range of subjects
  - ensuring that historical safeguarding records are linked to the current electronic system.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous full inspection, the school has undergone a rapid expansion of pupil numbers, staffing and the building. Senior leaders are reflective that the systems formerly in place were no longer effective for ensuring a good quality of education. They have restructured the leadership team and sought external advice and support to develop the new teaching team but these changes have yet to have an impact on outcomes for all age groups.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are realistic about the current position but ambitious for improvement. They have created an ethos, shared by staff, where all are highly motivated for the school to make these improvements and enable pupils to achieve what they are capable of.
- Although staff are motivated, some lack understanding of what these high expectations should look like in terms of pupils' work and the quality of teaching.
- Several middle leaders are new to post. They are enthusiastic and are taking the appropriate actions with the support of local authority advisers but have not yet had a full impact on improving teaching and learning across their subjects and teams.
- Teachers who are new to the profession and those new to leadership receive good-quality mentoring and professional development.
- Leaders have put in place a balanced curriculum, with topics that interest pupils. However, for most year groups, in subjects other than English and mathematics, these do not go into enough depth for pupils to learn what they should at their age.
- Support for pupils with SEND is a notable strength of the school. It is accredited by the National Autistic Society and is about to formally become a hub for advising other schools about provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder. Many pupils have complex needs. Most are successfully integrated into the standard classes. A small number of pupils spend some time in specialist low-sensory provision that supports their emotional and social development.
- Those who lead provision for SEND ensure that it is of high quality throughout the school. Teaching assistants work closely with external specialists, particularly speech therapists, and plan for pupils' support in school. Leaders give parents and carers additional support and advice through events such as regular coffee mornings.
- An external review of pupil premium spending was commissioned during the last academic year. This concluded that, while spending was appropriate, leaders were not being as methodical as they should be in breaking down how much funding was being allocated to each intervention. The review also advised that leaders should monitor spending more regularly and take proactive action to remove ineffective interventions at an earlier stage.
- Leaders have acted on the advice of the pupil premium review and incorporated the changes suggested into their practice. However, this has not yet had an impact on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils at key stage 2, both of which are well below that of other pupils nationally.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively. As a result, pupils take part in events outside of school that encourage enjoyment and participation in sports they may not have tried before. Those who show an aptitude for sports also have the opportunity to compete against others.
- Leaders consistently promote fundamental British values through assemblies, project work and personal, social and health education. They have ensured many opportunities for pupils to both be a community in school and link with local organisations outside.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors, alongside senior leaders, reflected on their practice in light of the low key stage 2 results in 2017 and 2018. They have sought advice from the local authority, including commissioning an external review into the pupil premium spending.
- Governors have adapted their work. They are more challenging to leaders. They, with senior leaders, are measuring the impact of actions more often. However, it is too early to see an impact of this work.
- Governors undertake regular monitoring and link visits. These are referenced back to key priorities such as the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The notes from these visits are circulated separately to minutes of governing body meetings, enabling other governors to follow through questions that occur on their own visits.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for all staff. They have a clear understanding of policies and of recent changes to legislation. Staff at all levels understand the risks to pupils.
- All concerns that staff report to senior leaders are dealt with promptly and effectively. Leaders have taken action where there have been concerns about those at risk of radicalisation and those at risk of being involved in gang activity. They have worked closely with the local secondary school to share information in these areas.
- The school uses an electronic system to record concerns, which has improved the quality of record-keeping. However, the previous paper-based systems are not referenced to in the electronic system. This presents a potential risk of infrequent but repeated incidents being missed, particularly as the school has grown and senior leaders do not have such full individual knowledge of each pupil.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- Leaders have recently introduced new systems for teaching reading, writing and mathematics. Although some recent improvement in the quality of pupils' work is evident, the quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school and most pupils are not making the progress that they should.
- Over the last year, reading has been a high focus. Teachers lead a daily session of group reading in addition to the English lesson. Pupils have access to high-quality books and those in key stage 2 enjoy additional quizzes on the computers to check

their understanding of the books they are reading. Activities in the guided reading sessions have developed pupils' comprehension skills. Even so, too many pupils are not able to fully explain their ideas and answers.

- Phonics teaching is effective. Pupils engage with the teaching and those who need additional practice are given this. However, older pupils' spelling of more complex and subject-specific words is often incorrect and, where teachers have picked up on errors, pupils continue to make them.
- Teachers have had recent training on planning for effective sequences of teaching writing. In some year groups, this is more established than in others. These teachers make good use of demonstrating writing and building up pupils' writing skills step by step. However, not all teachers understand how to do this and, where this is the case, pupils are not well supported to develop their writing. There are very few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in subjects other than English.
- The school's new approach to teaching mathematics shows that pupils across the school are making use of different ways of representing their thinking. Pupils practise the four basic mathematical operations daily. In some year groups, they are also emphasising reasoning further. This is at a developmental stage and, in other year groups, teachers' subject knowledge is sometimes not as strong as it should be.
- In the wider curriculum of subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils engage in topics and activities that interest them and they work hard on activities they are asked to. However, the teaching in most year groups does not develop knowledge and skills to the depth that is required for pupils' ages. Pupils do not regularly have the opportunity to apply their knowledge or explain their thinking. Teachers' subject knowledge of some subjects is limited and does not support pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers' relationships with the pupils they teach are very positive. Pupils are extremely clear that staff will help them if they have a problem or difficulty in their learning. Teachers check on pupils' well-being when they arrive in class and ensure that support is offered where needed. The ethos created in virtually all classrooms enables a calm, focused atmosphere where pupils want to work hard.
- Support for pupils with SEND is of a high standard. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to both aid these pupils in lessons and provide additional activities to fill gaps in learning. Pupils with complex needs are well integrated into routine classroom life and do well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They are confident that, if they have any problems, staff will sort them out quickly. Staff were seen to deal with such a concern with extremely prompt and supportive action during the inspection.
- While there are a limited number of incidents of bullying and racist behaviour, these are also followed up effectively and in a timely fashion. Parents are very happy with

the school. No parents who responded to Parent View, the Ofsted online survey, said that their children were unhappy or unsafe. Parents' comments are very positive. For example, 'My daughter absolutely loves school. She has grown in confidence and flourished' is typical.

- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities. They study famous people and other possible role models from a wide range of diverse backgrounds. The pupils can use this knowledge, for example applying the story of Rosa Parks, to explain why it is wrong to discriminate and why you should stand up for your beliefs and rights.
- Pupils join many community events, including laying wreaths at Remembrance services, singing to local care home residents and talking to those who lived locally about the Second World War.
- Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their achievements but also their differences. Pupils in assemblies could articulate that 'we are all different and we can all achieve'. Pupils are particularly supportive of the number of peers with autism spectrum disorder, and are clear that they 'encourage people to be themselves' and that 'they'll always be there for each other'. They are currently creating a pebble path, with each child decorating a pebble about things that are special to them.
- Cultural diversity is celebrated, often through dance in PE lessons or celebrating different religious festivals.
- Pupils are encouraged to be healthy. All of key stage 1 and 2 pupils take part in a 'daily mile' and Reception children do this weekly with a Year 6 'buddy'. As part of PE, pupils' stamina and fitness are measured yearly and have increased in every year group. There are many after-school clubs, many which are provided free of charge and others at low cost, including cheerleading, netball and mindfulness colouring.
- Pupils who attend the school's breakfast club and 'Night Owls' (the after-school club) enjoy this provision. Staff support pupils' learning by hearing pupils read as part of this. Pupils take part in a variety of fun activities that change daily, in mixed-age and mixed-gender groups.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are extremely well behaved. They work hard in their lessons and respond very quickly to adult instructions. Pupils are polite to each other and extremely accepting of any differences between each other.
- Most pupils move sensibly around the school site. They play well at break and lunchtimes, using the variety of equipment and toys provided.
- Attendance is slightly below the national average. However, persistent non-attendance is considerably higher than average. Leaders are highly aware of this as an issue to continue to work on. Attendance has a high profile in the school.
- Leaders have sought advice from both county attendance consultants and their local authority adviser. They appointed a specific pastoral lead as of September, with

attendance as a key part of the role. Leaders take a firm line on possible attendance issues. They regularly meet with parents, provide support of both advice and physical resources and also issue penalty notices.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Currently, too many pupils are not making good progress and this limits the standards of attainment they are reaching.
- In 2018, pupils at the end of key stage 2 made progress that was well below the national average and their attainment in the combined reading, writing and mathematics measure was significantly below the national average. Disadvantaged pupils' progress was particularly weak and their attainment was much lower than that of other pupils nationally.
- The proportions of pupils at the end of key stage 1 reaching the expected standard or above were below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. However, disadvantaged pupils at this age did better than other pupils nationally and the proportions of most-able pupils reaching a greater depth in reading and mathematics were above the national averages.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check has risen over time but is still below the national average.
- The school's own assessment information indicates that pupils in the early years and key stage 1 are making better progress recently but that older pupils have not yet made enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally. This was also evident from inspectors' book scrutinies across the school.
- Book scrutinies show that the changes made to the ways of teaching English and mathematics are having an impact but this is not yet enough for pupils to achieve well. Too many pupils' work is below the attainment targets set for their age.
- Pupils with SEND make progress from their own starting points but, as is the case for all pupils, this could be greater.

## Early years provision

## Good

- Children make a strong start to their education in the early years. The early years leader has been in post for a few years and, together with other senior leaders, has created a cohesive staff team that enables children to make good progress from activities undertaken.
- Children generally start school with skills, knowledge and understanding at a lower stage of development than is typical. This was evident from the school's comprehensive initial assessment of children's skills on entry. Children are making good progress from their starting points. However, over time, the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception is below the national average.
- Teachers lead sessions on phonics and mathematics daily and other important areas of learning during the week. These are followed up with children taking part in directed

activities led by members of staff. Staff work together daily to assess children's progress and allocate the next day's groupings so that those who need extra practice receive this and those who can move on further do so.

- During times where children can choose their own activities, there is a range on offer, often linking to the topic, such as making their own 'superhero vegetables' or using 'evil peas' to write simple words. Teachers plan specific activities in this time to meet the needs of individuals and groups in developing skills across the early years curriculum.
- The outside area is maintained to a high standard and children are kept very safe. Children balance on obstacle courses, play in the sand and hide in a tunnel. Adults engage the children in conversation and ask them questions to further their learning. Children enjoy taking part in role play, (during the inspection it was 'superheroes'), both inside and outside.
- In the classrooms, children are encouraged to write and use their emerging knowledge of sounds to do so. In mathematics, they counted objects and were comparing the mass of different fruits. Children are encouraged to record their own work and improve their pencil grip.
- Children starting at the school are supported well. Staff make repeated visits to nurseries before children start school and run 'stay and play' sessions after school in the summer term to enable children to get to know the school before starting. Parents are very positive about the start that their children make.
- Children's welfare is well supported. A number of staff are trained in paediatric first aid. Safeguarding is of the same effective quality as in the rest of the school.



## School details

Unique reference number	117284
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10053039

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	June Robinson
Headteacher	Susan Camp
Telephone number	01992 467 821
Website	<a href="http://www.forresprimary.co.uk">www.forresprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@forres.herts.sch.uk">head@forres.herts.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2018

## Information about this school

- The proportions of pupils with SEND and of those who have an education, health and care plan are well above average.
- The percentage rise in pupil numbers in the school year 2017/18 was high, owing to the school's rapid expansion to two classes in each year group.
- The school is accredited by the National Autistic Society.
- The school is the lead school for its area in the 'delivering special provision locally' project. It supports local schools in their provision for pupils with autism spectrum disorder, including primary, secondary and special schools. This work is funded by the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in every class. Some of these observations were undertaken alongside members of the senior leadership team.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by the inspection team.
- The inspection team met with representatives from the local governing body and the local authority adviser. They met with senior leaders, middle leaders and new teachers. The 36 responses to the staff survey were considered.
- Groups of pupils met with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke to pupils informally in lessons and at playtimes. The 182 responses to the pupil survey were considered.
- An inspector visited the school-run breakfast club.
- The inspection team scrutinised the school's website and a range of documents, including assessment information and the school's self-evaluation.
- Pupils read to inspectors and talked about their reading preferences.
- The 59 responses made by parents to Parent View were considered. The inspection team also spoke to some parents before school.

## Inspection team

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Liz Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Katherine Douglas	Ofsted Inspector

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