

Inspection of Four Elms Primary School

Bough Beech Road, Four Elms, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6NE

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Four Elms, both in their learning and their personal development. One parent commented, 'It has been wonderful to see our children flourish as little people.' Governors, leaders and staff are keen that all pupils should achieve their very best.

Teachers make learning enjoyable and pupils learn a lot in lessons. In most subjects, pupils repeatedly practise what they are learning so that they remember it.

Pupils behave extremely well throughout the school day. Pupils of all ages get on harmoniously with each other. High levels of respect underpin all relationships. Pupils told us that staff deal with any poor behaviour, although this occurs rarely. Bullying is also very rare. Staff ensure that pupils are safe.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of after-school clubs, some run by parents. These clubs are very well attended, particularly the ones for sporting activities.

The school benefits from its membership of the Inspire Federation. Expertise and support are helpfully shared across both schools. This provides extra opportunities for pupils and improves their learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children make a positive start to school in the early years. Parents and carers appreciate the support that staff give their children as they join the school. This helps them to settle quickly. The children are completely at home in their learning environment. They are able to work independently, with teaching staff expertly guiding them in their learning.

Leaders view reading as being the key to all future learning. As a result, reading is given high priority. Teaching staff make sure that pupils learn to read well from the moment they join the school. The few who struggle are quickly given extra help. Pupils of all ages read with enjoyment, fluency and understanding. Teachers also help pupils to develop a love of reading. The imaginatively designed book corners in each classroom are popular with pupils.

Pupils learn well in almost all subjects. For example, in reading, mathematics and art, leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to learn and when. Teachers check that pupils have securely learned the things that they should before moving on. This leads to good progress. Last year, achievement at key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was at least in line with the national average.

In a few subjects, leaders are aware that they need to do more to describe how pupils will build on their previous learning. For example, in science and French, leaders have well-considered plans to make sure that pupils know more and remember more.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Consequently, they make strong progress towards their individual targets. Teachers quickly identify their additional needs. Appropriate plans are then put in place. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) checks that these plans are working well. If not, they are suitably adjusted. Teaching assistants work skilfully with pupils with SEND.

Leaders have established very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils embrace these expectations so well that many cannot even imagine breaking school rules. Consequently, the school environment is calm, orderly and purposeful. In lessons, pupils are attentive and focused. They quickly follow any instructions they are given. Pupils are polite, considerate and caring at all times.

Pupils know that they have rights and so do others. This knowledge leads to excellent relationships. Older pupils are supportive of their younger peers and look out for them throughout the school day. Pupils expect everyone to be treated fairly. They are encouraged to be reflective, both in their learning and in their behaviour.

The school has an established link with the local church. Pupils regularly visit, most recently for their harvest festival, and the vicar visits the school to lead assemblies. Pupils support charities, for example by sending contributions to a local food bank.

Leadership is often shared across both schools in the Inspire Federation. This helps to improve teaching by spreading good practice. It also helps to keep staff workloads manageable. Senior leaders show genuine concern for staff well-being.

Governors understand their role. They check that leaders do everything they need to do. However, they do not always do this rigorously enough. For example, some governors knew that the school's website did not contain all the information that it should. Leaders did not make the necessary changes quickly and governors had not insisted that this happen.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff keep pupils safe. Regular training on the school's safeguarding procedures ensures that these procedures work well. The school's small size means that all staff get to know the pupils individually and can quickly spot if something might be wrong.

Staff report all concerns, however small. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are meticulous in how they follow up these concerns. They ensure that pupils get any extra help they might need to stay safe.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school; parents and staff agree that they are. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the national curriculum. It is broad and balanced. Learning is strongest in those subjects for which leaders have mapped out in detail what they expect pupils to learn and when. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are planned to the same high quality as the strongest subjects. In particular, they need to develop more detailed and well-sequenced plans for science and French.
- Governors understand their role and know the school well. Leaders provide them with comprehensive information about all aspects of the school's provision. Governors check this information by visiting the school to gain first-hand experience. However, governors need to be more stringent in holding leaders to account. In particular, they should ensure that their challenge is always formally recorded and leads to any necessary improvements being made.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	118275
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10111217
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Scott Gasson
Headteacher	Liz Mitchell (executive headteacher) Katie McCann (head of school)
Website	www.four-elms.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 February 2016

Information about this school

- In July 2018, the school joined with another local primary school to form the Inspire Federation. Both schools share a governing body and an executive headteacher. Several other leadership roles are also shared across both schools.
- There is a new leadership team at the school since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We evaluated the quality of education by looking in detail at the teaching of reading, mathematics, science and art. This included meeting with senior leaders and subject leaders, visiting lessons, discussing learning with teachers, talking to pupils from different classes and looking at their work. The lead inspector also heard some pupils read.
- We met with the executive headteacher, head of school, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, the early years leader and three governors (including the chair of the governing body). The lead inspector also spoke to a

representative from the local authority on the phone.

- We looked at the school's records of safeguarding checks and how safeguarding concerns are handled. We spoke to staff about how pupils are kept safe and to pupils about whether they felt safe.
- We observed pupils arriving for school and during morning breaktime, lunchtime and a school assembly.
- We looked at a range of school documentation and carefully examined the school's website.
- There were 11 responses to the online staff survey and 45 responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including 27 written comments. All these responses were taken into account during the inspection. An inspector also spoke informally to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Chris Donovan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jonathan Shields

Ofsted Inspector

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