

# Inspection of Fordham CofE Primary School

Isleham Road, Fordham, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 5NL

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Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 13 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school's values of faith and friendship are understood and demonstrated by pupils. Pupils enjoy the friendly and calm atmosphere at this school. Pupils go out of their way to greet visitors and welcome new pupils to the school. By being helpful and positive, pupils manage their relationships at school well. They are well equipped to find positive solutions when friends fall out.

Pupils feel and are safe at school. Bullying is very rare, and pupils know what to do if they feel that they or their peers experience bullying. Should concerns arise, pupils feel confident that any member of staff would stop bullying and ensure it does not reoccur.

Pupils value learning. They show curiosity and interest in what they are trying to learn. They work hard in lessons and with determination when facing tricky topics in the curriculum. Starting in Reception, pupils bring the best out of each other when working with others in lessons. They share their thoughts articulately and listen to others politely. Pupils take pride in their achievements. They also enjoy celebrating the achievements of others in lessons and assemblies.

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

Over recent years, leaders have introduced new approaches to the school's curriculum. They have organised the curriculum so that teachers deliver knowledge in sensible steps that ensure pupils build on their prior learning. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to review what was taught previously. As a result, pupils remember much of the knowledge leaders expect. Leaders provide teachers with effective training and the guidance they need to plan appropriate learning activities. These contribute towards teachers' effective delivery of the curriculum. Leaders' ongoing evaluation of quality ensures that they identify and improve weaker areas of the curriculum.

Staff implement leaders' approach to assessment consistently well. They quickly identify and provide effective support when pupils do not remember or understand something.

In September 2022, leaders adopted a new approach to the teaching of early reading. Staff deliver this new approach effectively. Children in Reception learn the basics of reading well. They are well prepared to develop their reading in Year 1. Leaders ensure that pupils who find reading difficult receive the support they need to avoid falling behind. The older pupils who have not secured the basics needed to read confidently are being well supported to catch up.

Leaders ensure that staff identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) at the earliest signs of difficulty. Working with external specialists, leaders provide the guidance staff need to plan learning activities for pupils with

SEND. Staff do not always follow leaders' guidance. On occasion, staff do not provide what these pupils need. As a result, pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could.

Staff ensure that pupils learn how to behave appropriately at school. Pupils follow the routines staff put in place. School runs in an orderly fashion, and pupils concentrate on their learning. Leaders ensure that pupils who find it hard to regulate their behaviour are well supported. This includes strong support from staff for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. Leaders and staff understand the unique needs of each of these pupils and put in place effective help. These pupils benefit from the well-designed provision and learn leaders' expectations of behaviour.

Staff support pupils to learn about their own beliefs and those of others. Pupils investigate the spiritual side of life and learn how to value the religious practices of others. They are well prepared to live peacefully alongside those with different beliefs and lifestyles. Staff also provide pupils with opportunities to take responsibility. For example, older pupils serve as play leaders on the playground, modelling positive play for younger children in Reception. Pupils also take on the job of keeping the school's guinea pigs fed and the enclosure clean.

Leaders have built strong relationships with staff, parents and pupils. During the inspection, many parents were effusive with their praise of the school. Parents of children in Reception or of pupils new to the school appreciate the effective arrangements leaders have in place for new starters. Staff have confidence in the leadership of the school. They report high morale among staff. They say that leaders ensure that staff have reasonable workloads.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school and carry out their statutory duties effectively. They ensure they get the information they need to evaluate the quality of the school's provision. Governors hold leaders strictly to account for their work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date information about the risks pupils face. Staff use this to identify and alert leaders to any concerns about a pupil. Leaders work at pace with external agencies, keeping meticulous records that show how they ensure that vulnerable pupils get the support they need.

Leaders oversee the completion of necessary background checks on all adults working or volunteering in the school. Governors check to ensure these and the wider procedures work effectively.

Pupils understand the risks they face at school, home and in the community. They know how to reduce risks and stay safe.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not consistently use leaders' guidance about how to support pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils do not always receive the help they need to overcome the challenges they face. As such, they do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to ensure that staff understand and use leaders' guidance consistently in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities for pupils with SEND.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110788
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267858
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	417
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Laura Cox-Watson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Rankin
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fordhamprimary.co.uk">www.fordhamprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 March 2010 under section 5 of the Education Act

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in February 2020.
- The number of pupils with education, health and care plans increased significantly between 2019 and 2023.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in July 2015. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place before July 2023.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors held discussions with the chair of the governing body, members of the governing body, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, pupils and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, physical education, early reading and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors considered leaders' policies, plans and records regarding pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors looked at safeguarding policies, child protection records and the register of background checks of adults working at the school. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding practices at the school.
- Inspectors considered the 122 responses by parents and carers to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 44 responses to the online staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Al Mistrano, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Laura Hewer	Ofsted Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector

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