

Inspection of Finstock Church of England Primary School

School Road, Finstock, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire OX7 3BN

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Leanne Dixon. This school is part of the Mill Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Wendy Hemmingsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Claire King.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive an excellent start to their education. Every morning pupils arrive with a palpable sense of enthusiasm towards their learning. This is because the school has the highest ambition for every pupil to be the best they can be. The school vision of 'providing all children with the highest level of academic curriculum and pastoral care' is fully realised. Pupils are exceptionally well equipped for continued success.

Pupils behave impeccably in lessons and at play times. They have a profound understanding of kindness and friendship. Younger children admire and seek guidance from their peers, who they view as caring and supportive role models. Older pupils see the school as 'one big family' and relish the opportunity to play and learn alongside each other.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, (SEND) thrive. They benefit from a comprehensive curriculum and also access a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Pupils participate keenly in competitions such as boccia and cross country. Moreover, they exhibit a strong ecological knowledge, caring deeply for the environment. Through forest school activities and creating a welcoming habitat for bats and birds within the school grounds, pupils showcase their detailed understanding of the natural world.

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

The school is unwavering in its pursuit of excellence. Its highly developed curriculum sets out the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary pupils will learn. The content of the curriculum is carefully mapped out so that pupils routinely revisit key concepts, which helps them to remember more and in greater detail. Pupils with SEND are quickly identified and supported effectively to access learning across the full curriculum. Staff regularly check for gaps in pupils' understanding and provide swift support, so pupils do not fall behind. Pupils demonstrate a strong engagement with their learning. Because of this, they become confident and articulate learners who achieve exceptionally well.

Children receive a tremendous start to their educational journey in early years. The curriculum is skilfully designed to develop children's language and communication. Staff settle children into routines quickly, so they feel safe and happy. They know the children and families exceptionally well. Learning tasks are carefully managed so that children experience the full ambition of the curriculum. Staff ensure carefully crafted activities ignite children's enjoyment when learning new concepts. Ambitious vocabulary is promoted to extend children's use of language.

Reading is a high priority. The school recognises the importance of reading and ensures that the staff deliver the phonics curriculum precisely and with fidelity. Children are skilfully supported in Nursery to develop their speaking and listening skills, preparing them for a strong start when they reach Reception class. Staff make

sure that books are carefully matched to the sounds pupils know. Because of this, pupils gain the secure phonics knowledge they need to be successful readers. Staff are quick to identify pupils who need extra support, so they catch up quickly. Pupils love to read, and they access an extensive range of books by different authors. They relish every opportunity to read aloud in class.

The school has the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour and attendance. Staff model these expectations carefully to pupils. As a result, pupils strive to meet these expectations daily. They are polite and considerate to each other. One pupil echoed the views of many, saying, 'We are like a family.'

The school ensures that pupils receive an exciting and broad range of experiences to enhance learning. The curriculum is brought alive through these experiences and the school is ambitious for all pupils to participate. Pupils are well prepared for life beyond Finstock. They have a strong sense of justice and have a deep-rooted understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils are tolerant and respectful and welcome everyone to their school. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to support local community initiatives and charities. For example, pupils contributed to a village campaign to reduce speed limits and to raise money for a hedgehog welfare organisation. They also look beyond the village to celebrate other cultures and countries, such as Japan.

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils, staff and the community that they serve. Staff receive a well-structured programme of training and development, designed to support effective teaching. The school ensures staff workload and well-being are priorities. Staff value the collaborative working within the trust schools which supports their teaching. The trust and local committee fulfil their statutory duties with expertise, ensuring a strong partnership across the trust. They share the same high ambitions for the school and all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	142350
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10296427
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Claire King
Chief Executive Officer	Wendy Hemmingsley
Headteacher	Leanne Dixon
Website	www.finstock.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Finstock Church of England Primary School is one of three schools in the Mill Academy trust.
- The school is a Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the

curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspectors explored the wider curriculum through sampling pupils' work in science, Latin, design technology and history.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, director of education and the special educational needs coordinator.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents provided by the school and observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- The inspectors met with members of the local committee and representatives from the trust.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View, and an inspector also talked with parents.
- The views of staff were gathered through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including during classroom visits and at playtimes and lunchtime.

Inspection team

Simon Woodbridge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Claire Britnell

Ofsted Inspector

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