Inspection of Finchampstead CofE VA Primary School

The Village, Finchampstead, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 4JR

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 July 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Finchampstead School is a small, friendly school with a big heart. Strong levels of care ensure that pupils feel safe, valued and respected. Pupils get on very well together, happily helping each other out and looking after each other if anyone needs a friendly word. Pupils of all ages are confident about talking to an adult in school if they are feeling anxious. Pupils feel well supported with their learning.

Pupils respond positively to the school's high expectations. They are keen to do their best, work hard and achieve well. Pupils are polite, confident and articulate. Children in the early years are excited about learning. Most pupils behave well during lessons and unstructured times, such as play times. Staff are committed to achieving the very best for every pupil. Strong teamwork contributes to the school's cohesive atmosphere.

The school's values, such as thankfulness, hope and friendship, are applied thoughtfully to help pupils to develop personally, socially and emotionally. Its religious character is an important element of school life, providing a secure framework for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Learning is successfully enriched through a schedule of carefully planned activities, including trips and visits. Parents and carers speak highly of the school's work, appreciating its welcoming and caring atmosphere.

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

The school has taken successful steps to address each of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. This has ensured that pupils continue to achieve well and are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Children in the Reception class are prepared effectively with the key knowledge and skills needed for successful learning in Year 1. Pupils behave well during lessons and breaktimes. The school has recently refined its behaviour policy. A stronger focus on teaching strategies to help pupils to manage their own behaviour is making a positive difference to behaviour.

The school has worked with commitment and determination to make sure that the curriculum content taught is clearly identified in every subject. This work has been completed in most subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. However, in a few subjects, work to develop the curriculum is ongoing. In these subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to know is not as clearly identified as it could be. This means that staff are not consistently clear about the essential knowledge pupils need to learn and remember. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

A carefully planned and effective schedule of training has strengthened staff's subject knowledge since the previous inspection. This has improved the consistency of curriculum delivery and of pupils' learning. Staff complete regular checks on pupils' learning. They use these checks well to gauge what pupils have learned and to identify when to move them on to the next steps in learning.

The school has provided professional development in the past year, which has included a focus on adapting the curriculum effectively for pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND). The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND promptly. Staff provide thoughtful and successful support for pupils with SEND. They use activities and resources well to capture pupils' interest and to ensure that they learn successfully alongside their classmates.

The school promotes a love of reading from children's earliest days in school. Pupils of all ages love books and enjoy reading. Children in the Reception class talk excitedly about books. Texts are successfully brought to life through skilfully chosen activities that support learning well. Pupils benefit from a consistent and effective phonics programme that is established well across the school. This means that the youngest children quickly develop reliable reading skills. Pupils in the older year groups who need extra help are supported well and catch up quickly.

Pupils attend well. The school has refined its systems to check on pupils' attendance since the previous inspection. This has ensured that support is even more successfully targeted than before, with extra help provided where it is needed most. This has led to notable improvements in attendance for individual pupils.

The school's personal development programme teaches pupils important knowledge to support them in future life, such as how to keep healthy and how to behave appropriately in different situations and scenarios. The school provides a wide range of popular clubs. Pupils have regular opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, such as serving as sports captains, librarians or as members of the school council. Pupils thoroughly enjoy trips and visits and talk enthusiastically about how these help them to learn.

Governors are understandably proud of the improvements in the school since the previous inspection. They are knowledgeable about the difference these have made to pupils' learning and attendance and about future priorities for development. Governors engage well with parents and staff, regularly seeking their views and actively responding to feedback. Staff are proud to work in the school. They appreciate the steps taken to help them to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the important knowledge that pupils need to know is not as clearly identified as it could be. Where this is the case, pupils do not develop knowledge and understanding as fully as they can. The school should ensure that the key knowledge that pupils need to learn is clearly identified and delivered consistently across the curriculum.

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	110012
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10379725
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	108
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Nigel Kennington
Headteacher	Jacquie Vanstone
Website	www.finchampsteadschool.org
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England School and is part of the Diocese of Oxford.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in September 2024. The next section 48 inspection will take place within three to five years.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with nine governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and with a representative of the Diocese of Oxford.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were gathered through a range of sources, including discussions and Ofsted's surveys. The inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day. An inspector also met with a group of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work and talking with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also reviewed a sample of pupils' English work and discussed the quality of pupils' writing with leaders.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Blackmore	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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