



# Finchingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115107  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279512  
**Inspection dates** 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. John Paull LI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Vicarage Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		CM7 4LD
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01371810423
<b>Number on roll</b>	63	<b>Fax number</b>	01371811186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.Chris Davies
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 September 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms. Paula Hagan

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279512
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Finchingfield is a small primary school. It is situated in a picturesque village that attracts many tourists during the summer. This means that employment for some is seasonal. It is located to the north of Braintree, a small town with several light industrial and business units that offer further work for people living in the surrounding rural area. The vast majority of the school's pupils are of white British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs is average and two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Most of the older age groups have more boys than girls. When children first enter the Reception class their attainment is average, although the range is very wide. A new headteacher took up responsibility for leading the school at the beginning of this term.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

The inspection confirms the school's view that it provides sound value for money and that it offers its pupils a satisfactory education. Certain aspects are good. The headteacher has made a very good start, effectively demonstrating an ability to take the school forward. She has produced good, clear plans about what needs to be done to improve the school further and is already putting these plans into practice. Parents are highly supportive. Several commented that the school is already moving on. One summed it up, saying that it has always been a good school, but that she now detects 'renewed optimism about where it is headed'. There is good support for pupils' personal development, especially for developing pupils' individuality. Good care, guidance and support are evident and the curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Academic standards are broadly average and pupils make sound progress. Owing to consistent management and the effectiveness of systems to improve writing, standards in English have often been better than in other subjects. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. For a variety of reasons, including periods of staffing instability, it has not always been consistent. There has been inconsistency in monitoring the quality and use of assessment, teaching and learning. This especially relates to the reviewing of pupils' targets so that they do not have to wait a long while until completed targets are updated. Resources for children in the Reception year are clearly better and a building project should provide further improvement for outdoor play. Standards and provision in information and communication technology (ICT) have been addressed effectively.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Use assessment more tightly to set pupils' targets, adapting and changing them as they are achieved.
- To improve pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, ensure what is taught and learned is based on pupils' targets.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management of subjects and ensure that it is as good as in English.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards that are broadly in line with national expectations and the school's own targets. Over the past year or so, there has been an increase in the number of pupils in older age groups with a Statement of Special Educational Need or with learning difficulties who require intervention from outside agencies. Such services have been used effectively to help pupils progress well. Despite their good progress, it has been from an understandably lower base and, therefore, explains why standards are not as high now as a few years ago. For the past couple of years, results of Year 6 National Curriculum tests have fallen from a high in 2002, when the school won a national achievement award. In 2003 and 2004, results in mathematics and science were lower than in English, which reflects the school's successful priority on raising standards in literacy. The new headteacher has begun to

analyse and draw on the key influences that have contributed to this picture, in order to apply similar techniques to the other subjects. Standards and progress in the Reception year are currently good. The new children who began in September are very settled and clearly enjoy school. They join in activities enthusiastically, counting accurately and talking confidently.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They understand many important factors involved in looking after themselves. Nearly all of them come to school cheerfully, arriving on time, and their attendance is good. Behaviour in lessons and around the building is excellent. Pupils enjoy school and provide clear convincing reasons about their favourite subjects and activities. They are polite, not only to adults, but to each other, for instance, by holding doors and offering assistance with chairs or articles that need to be carried. They know several facts about healthy living, exercise and what to eat. They speak sensibly about precautions that should be taken with regard to personal safety. Many are willing to serve the community as school councillors, trying to keep the promises that they make when standing for election. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies contain reflection and Christian prayers and pupils think carefully about others and the world around them. While opportunities to mix with children of minority ethnic backgrounds are limited in the locality, much has been done to help pupils appreciate diversity. Groups have visited Aklowa, a Nigerian centre nearby, and a useful link has been established with a primary school in Bethnal Green, London. Other aspects of cultural development, arising in history, geography and art are also good. Pupils develop clear ideas about how to tell right from wrong and they co-operate well during work and play. Personal, social and emotional development of children in the Reception year is very good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the lessons seen were good. Two main reasons are evident for this disparity. First, staffing was unstable for a while, owing to sickness, and teachers joining and leaving the school. This caused a few gaps in pupils' learning. Secondly, assessment has not always been used effectively, to set and change targets frequently enough in order to support pupils' learning. The leadership and management of mathematics and, to some extent, science, has not been as rigorous in this respect as it has been in English. As a result, while teaching has always been sufficient to achieve satisfactory standards and progress, its impact has not been consistent. Nevertheless, this feature is improving now. The new headteacher has very clear ideas about how consistency can be brought about. Her methodical approach is already starting to improve matters. Teaching in the Reception class is good and meets the children's needs well. Much equipment has been purchased

since the last inspection, contributing to an improvement in the quality of teaching across all areas of learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are also taught effectively. They often make good progress, owing to the careful way in which individual plans are constructed. These plans are used well, informing adults about the support they need to give, so pupils reach their targets effectively.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

These are good. The curriculum in the Reception year is thorough and provides all the required areas of learning. In classes for other age groups, all subjects of the National Curriculum are provided and statutory requirements are met. Literacy and numeracy are emphasised to support learning across the curriculum and to enable pupils to develop the skills needed for future well-being. New equipment and resources have been purchased for use in ICT, a weakness in the last inspection, and provision is now satisfactory. Enrichment activities, visits and visitors are particularly strong features that support teaching in many subjects. Links between subjects are made effectively. Pupils' artwork is often of high quality and is frequently used to support learning in other subjects. The introduction of sessions known as Fun Friday provide further enrichment and opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good support for pupils is evident. Day-to-day care and commitment to ensure that pupils are safe is good. Teaching about safety and relationships is taken seriously and outside agencies, such as Crucial Crew, are involved in enhancing provision. The school makes strong contributions to pupils' understanding of factors affecting their health and has introduced a fruit scheme and a policy of allowing only healthy snacks at break times. Improvements to the school's assessment arrangements are in hand with a view to ensuring that pupils' targets are used more effectively to promote learning. The needs of pupils who have difficulties learning are identified effectively. Special cards are sent to these pupils, inviting them to reviews of their provision and all of them attend at least for part of the meeting. The school's procedures for child protection and assessment of health and safety risks meet statutory requirements and training in these areas is up to date.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The recently appointed headteacher has made a very strong start and is well supported by staff, parents and governors. Longer-serving members are also present so, overall, governors' understanding of the school's needs and its importance in the life of the village is sound. Several governors are fairly new to their roles but are supported well by the longer-serving members. The headteacher has evaluated the school's present needs and her planning of what

it should do to improve is strong and perceptive. However, much of this proposed change focuses on elements of management and co-ordination of subjects that are not sufficiently consistent. While pupils achieve satisfactorily, this inconsistency is the main reason that standards are not higher than they are. Nevertheless, a renewed emphasis on improving assessment and using its results to promote learning in all subjects is likely to remedy this situation quickly. Monitoring to ensure that boys and girls of different backgrounds have equal opportunities to progress is good. The school has adequate staff and resources to contribute effectively to learning and the future looks good. The most important example is the advanced planning stage that has been reached in the provision of a new hall. Pupils are very excited about this proposal and they are proud that they have been consulted about it. This extension also allows for a new outdoor play area for children in their Reception year.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for being welcoming when I visited your school. I think that you are making satisfactory progress. I thoroughly enjoyed being in your school and coming to your lessons. I especially enjoyed chatting with you about your work and talking with the school council. You were all very helpful and polite. What I like most about your school: - I think that your headteacher has made a very good start at your school and has very good ideas about how to improve it. - I think that you work very sensibly in your lessons. - Your behaviour is excellent. - I am very pleased that you enjoy school and that your attendance and punctuality are so good. - You are kind and thoughtful and the school councillors do a good job. - Your teachers help you to feel safe and sound. What I have asked your headteacher, the staff and the school's governors to do next: - To keep checking how you are getting on and changing your targets more frequently. - To see that what you learn is always based on your targets, so that teaching helps you make good progress. - To make sure that work in all your subjects is managed as well as in English. I hope that you will always be proud of your school and wish you well in the future.