

Fingringhoe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Fingringhoe, Colchester, Essex CO5 7BN

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and her team have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection in 2016. The quality of education is now good.
- The governing body is highly effective. Governors ably support school leaders and challenge them where necessary.
- Pupils are provided with a broad curriculum. Leaders also ensure that pupils receive an interesting and engaging extra-curricular programme.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. They learn in a supportive and positive learning environment. Adults plan learning that is stimulating and develops basic skills well.
- Pupils cooperate and support each other well. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe including online. There is a strong safeguarding culture at the school.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They understand and respect diversity and are aware of democratic processes. They understand right and wrong.
- Most groups of pupils are making at least expected progress. Some pupils are not making rapid enough progress, particularly the most able pupils, because work is often too easy.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics is not consistently good so pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Attendance has been lower than it should be at the school, and lower than that found nationally. Recently, due to leaders' actions, pupils' attendance is starting to rise.
- Too many key responsibilities are still performed by the headteacher. Although middle leaders are beginning to make an impact, it is too early to fully assess their effectiveness.
- Teaching over time is mostly good. Leaders check the quality of teaching regularly. The information from these checks is not always used effectively to ensure further improvement.
- Pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 still remains lower than national averages. Improvements seen in pupils' progress in 2017 are currently being accelerated.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement further by:
 - improving the quality of teaching in mathematics
 - accelerating pupils' progress in all subjects
 - using assessment information to plan more opportunities for most-able pupils to excel so that a greater percentage reach the higher standards.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - providing accurate feedback which focuses precisely on what staff need to do to further improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - sharing leadership roles and responsibilities more widely so that middle leaders are more effective in driving the school's priorities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has been through a substantial period of leadership change. The substantive headteacher is ambitious for the pupils at her school and has effectively improved the quality of education so it is now good. She is ably supported by a committed deputy headteacher and a dedicated staff team.
- Leaders have planned an engaging and stimulating curriculum. The national curriculum is enriched by a range of activities such as dance, which includes elements of yoga and martial arts, and football which the pupils really enjoy. These activities contribute to their physical development and compensate for a limited school site with little outside space.
- Pupils very much enjoy the range of extra-curricular clubs provided. These include Art, Netball and Homework Club. Parents and carers appreciate these and report that more clubs for the younger pupils would be welcomed. Some parents are invited to attend the homework club to develop their skills in supporting their children at home.
- The school prepares its pupils well for life in modern Britain. British values are a key part of the curriculum, both in lessons and assemblies and there is a display which informs parents about these values in the school entrance. 'Pupil Voice' forms an important part of school life and all classes are involved in this. They select and vote on areas of responsibility around the school and therefore learn about democracy and representation.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is provided for effectively at this church school. The assembly observed during the inspection was reflective, with a key moral purpose about showing courage. Pupils, in their discussions with the inspector, demonstrate a clear understanding of right and wrong as well as an understanding of and respect for difference.
- Staff are highly motivated, proud to work at the school and very supportive of the school's leadership. Results from the staff questionnaire were extremely positive. They receive regular and appropriate training linked to performance management targets. There is a real feeling of being part of a team at this school.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. After a period of considerable turbulence, they are grateful to have a stable and effective staffing and leadership structure. The headteacher and her staff engage well with parents and provide them with information about their children. One parent reflected the view of many when she said, 'It's the whole team – it feels like a family.'
- The school is part of a large local consortium of schools, which has provided opportunities for a small staff such as this to work with colleagues elsewhere. This has supported teachers to make accurate assessment judgements as well as improving their practice. School leaders have appreciated the support they have received from the local authority.

- The headteacher leads a regular programme of monitoring and training for teachers and support staff in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Some middle leaders are now beginning to carry out monitoring in their areas of responsibility. Feedback from these activities is at times overly positive and does not focus clearly enough on areas for development that will have the most impact on raising standards of achievement.
- Pupils' progress is closely monitored by the headteacher. Over the past eighteen months, pupils' progress rates have improved and are continuing to do so. The feedback provided to teachers can sometimes be generic rather than focusing on the progress that groups of pupils, for example the most able or disadvantaged pupils, make.
- Many key leadership responsibilities are still held by the headteacher in this small school. Middle leaders are starting to make a difference. However, the impact of newer middle leadership is still new and as yet unproven.

Governance of the school

- The governing body of the school is very effective. Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. There is a wide range of expertise on the governing body and this is used effectively to support and challenge school leaders.
- Governors have been rightly supportive of the headteacher over a period of planned absence, so that the school continued to improve and develop. Consequently, governors demonstrate they are dedicated and committed to the success of the school and raising the quality of education for its pupils.
- There are clear and rigorous protocols in place for the headteacher's performance management. Targets are focused on improving outcomes.
- Statutory duties held by the governing body are carried out well. They ensure that the communication to parents through the information on the school website is comprehensive and easily accessible.
- Additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils, physical education and sport premium and for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is carefully monitored by the governors and headteacher. Governors are becoming increasingly skilled at checking how well the money is spent to ensure that individuals make the best progress they can.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority at the school. Staff are trained regularly and follow school procedures well if they have any concerns about pupils. Staff receive any updates or changes to statutory guidance in a timely way. Leadership of child protection is rigorous with all concerns appropriately followed up.

- All records and files kept for safeguarding are thorough and clear procedures are known to all. Leaders and governors ensure that the necessary checks on the suitability of adults to work with pupils are carried out effectively. The school's safeguarding processes are clear and up to date, and meet requirements.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. Those spoken with could identify a person with whom they could speak if they had concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now consistently good over time. Pupils are making better progress as a result. Adults use time in lessons well. Pupils enjoy learning in lessons that have a clear purpose and include differing levels of challenge.
- Teachers have given careful thought about how to make the curriculum interesting and engaging. Lessons in subjects such as history and geography are delivered through themes such as 'sizzle and shiver'. Pupils are keen to participate in these themes in an active, investigative way.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is used consistently by teachers to respond to pupils' work and explain how to improve. Pupils understand the system and are becoming increasingly skilled in understanding what they need to do to make their work better.
- Work in books is well presented and handwriting is generally of a high standard. Books are well maintained and valued and there is a wide range of work in English and mathematics. While it is clear to see the accelerated progress pupils are now making in writing, it is less clear in mathematics. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- The school's homework policy has been reviewed recently involving parents and pupils. Most are happy with the amount and frequency of work set. Home-school reading journals are regularly completed by many parents.
- The school and parents have a good relationship that assists pupils in making the best progress they can in developing their reading skills. As a result, pupils enjoy reading. They show age-appropriate awareness of reading strategies, including phonics, and read with confidence.
- Parents are happy with the amount of information they receive from the school about their child's progress and achievement. Regular consultation events are held and newsletters are sent out fortnightly. Parents who spoke with the inspector report that school leaders and staff are approachable. Those new to the school are delighted with how well their child is progressing at Fingringhoe Primary School.
- Assessment information is used by staff to plan lessons. This is used generically at the moment, rather than identifying what individual pupils or groups of pupils need in order to accelerate their learning.
- At times, the most able pupils are still provided with work that is too easy. Often, they have to wait too long before they are provided with tasks that make them think

in depth. Pupils report that 'it's simple' in some lessons. When the most able pupils are given work that requires them to think and work hard, such as in Year 6, they relish the opportunities they receive to excel.

- Teaching and learning in mathematics, which is an area of focus for the school, are improving but are not yet good. At times, adults' explanations are not as clear as they could be and pupils' misunderstandings are not corrected swiftly enough or go unnoticed. Standards still lag behind those in reading and writing. The school is using a variety of new strategies and approaches to improve this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is an orderly and well-presented environment. Pupils are well mannered and are proud of their school.
- Pupils show respect for themselves and each other and enjoy positive relationships with both adults and their peers. They know how to keep themselves safe, including from bullying and online risks. The school's records on bullying and other concerns indicate that any issues are dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- A recent focus for the school has been on having a positive, can-do approach to learning. This approach is beginning to have a good impact on pupils' emotional well-being.
- Leaders provide effective enrichment activities which cater for pupils' physical well-being, such as those provided by the sports coaches. These additions have been well received by parents and pupils. Leaders make the best possible use of the limited outdoor space so that pupils develop their physical skills.
- Pupils are becoming confident and resilient individuals who enjoy learning and have a positive attitude towards school. They take pride in their work and want to do well. Punctuality is improving as a result of a concerted effort by the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons and around the school, pupils are well behaved. Lunchtimes and breaktimes are suitably social occasions. During lunchtime, the dining hall is an attractive, well-organised place, where pupils enjoy chatting with their friends. Pupils are kind to each other and respond appropriately when others hold different views to their own.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those spoken with during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about how effectively leaders deal with behaviour, 'It is dealt with, and parents are kept

informed.’ They agree that behaviour is good. Where there are rare incidents of poor behaviour, these are handled sensitively and appropriately.

- Generally, lessons flow smoothly and pupils respond well to requests from adults. Where explanations from staff are unclear, or when the tasks set are too easy or too hard, there is sometimes low-level disruption, which can impact on the learning of others.
- Attendance for the past two years has been lower than national averages and persistent absence has been high. The school has taken a proactive stance with families towards term-time absence, including holidays, as well as stressing the importance of being in school. This is beginning to pay off, with attendance rates for last term much higher than previously.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, improvements in pupils’ attainment and progress, particularly in key stage 2, have been quite slow. Currently, pupils’ achievement is rapidly improving. Consequently, although outcomes for pupils are not yet good they are improving significantly.
- In 2016 at key stage 2, the combined score of reading, writing and mathematics was much lower than national averages. Although pupils’ attainment improved in 2017, it remained below the national average. Cohorts are small and this may cause some fluctuations with attainment, but not all pupils made sufficient progress for their achievement to be good.
- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, a similar picture existed, with pupils achieving below the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with national averages. While still below averages, this was an improvement on 2016.
- A more realistic measure, given the small cohorts at Fingringhoe, is to compare the school’s progress figures with national progress data. This shows that in 2016 and 2017 between key stage 1 and key stage 2, the school’s progress in all subjects and for all reported groups of pupils was broadly average. Progress did improve between 2016 and 2017 in writing but dipped in reading by a similar amount.
- Work in books currently and in-school data show that some teachers are using assessment information and pupils’ starting points well to plan for progress. This is not yet consistent. As a result, the most able pupils are not yet making the progress of which they are fully capable in mathematics and in other subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, are beginning to make stronger progress currently across the school. This will enable them to catch up with their peers and with other pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Results from the national phonics screening check, taken in Year 1, indicate that outcomes have improved from well below average in 2015 to broadly in line by 2017. Pupils’ achievement continues to improve.

- Current progress data at the school also shows a continually improving picture. Most groups of pupils are now making at least average progress. Where pupils are making accelerated progress, this is starting to impact on end of key stage results.

Early years provision

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and early years team have worked hard to improve what the school offers its youngest pupils. The outdoor area is now used as effectively as possible, given the space limitations and shared use at breaktimes. Teachers carefully plan activities which develop children's engagement and independence and also develop their skills.
- Reception children are taught in a mixed-aged class with Year 1. Staff give careful thought to the planning of activities to help children in Reception make good progress from their sometimes strong starting points. Adults use regular assessments and observations effectively to record children's achievements in all areas for learning.
- In 2017, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception rose to above national averages for the first time. This was a significant improvement on results in 2015 and 2016. Adults have high expectations of what children can achieve. Children's workbooks demonstrate that they are making good progress from their starting points.
- The school has recently started using an assessment system which is shared with parents on a regular basis. Staff are finding this useful in recording children's achievements and parents enjoy seeing what their children have been learning.
- Phonics is taught well in the early years. Children enjoy these sessions and are keen to demonstrate their phonics knowledge. In child-chosen play activities, one child was applying these skills having written 'pegign' next to her drawing of a penguin.
- All safety and welfare requirements are met and given a high priority. Children are taught about dangers and keeping safe. Staffing ratios are high and all staff hold relevant qualifications or have received appropriate training.
- Relationships between adults and children and children and their peers are strong and supportive. Routines which support learning and communication are well established. Behaviour is good both inside and outside of the classroom and when working independently.
- Groups of pupils with additional needs are quickly identified and interventions and strategies put in place to support them. As a result, these children settle quickly and make progress.
- Leadership of the early years is improving. The leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas to improve further in the early years. Adults work well together as a team in the mixed-aged class.
- Children's individual starting points are beginning to be used to plan for learning currently. The early years leader acknowledges that for children to progress further,

more precisely planned opportunities need to be provided, particularly for the most able children.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 115139 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 10041760 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 88 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Victoria Martin |
| Headteacher | Suzanne Ryan |
| Telephone number | 01206 729266 |
| Website | www.fingringhoe.essex.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@fingringhoe.essex.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 21–22 January 2016 |

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average sized primary school.
- The school has undergone changes in leadership since the last inspection. This includes a period with an interim headteacher. The current headteacher was appointed in February 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that found in other schools.
- The proportion of pupils requiring special educational needs support is below that found in other schools. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is slightly higher.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is very low. Most pupils speak English as their home language.

Information about this inspection

- A wide range of school documentation and data was considered during the inspection. This includes the school's self-evaluation summary, the school development plan, safeguarding logs and school policies, the school attendance data as well as current and historic achievement information.
- The inspector visited all classes; some of these were seen jointly with school leaders. Pupils' books and work produced was scrutinised to check the quality of their progress over time. The inspector heard a number of pupils reading and discussed their reading with them.
- Discussions were held with a number of parents during the inspection. The inspector took account of 61 parental responses from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 50 free-text responses.
- Interviews and discussions were held with a number of school leaders, including the governing body and school staff. The results of 12 responses to the online staff questionnaire were taken into account.
- A school assembly was observed as well as play at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The inspector spoke with a number of pupils both in lessons and during lunchtime and breaktime to take account of their views and opinions.
- The inspector met with the local authority improvement officer.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Bell-Cook, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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