

Finstall First School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116660
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	379282
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Anna Coyle

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Ellis
Headteacher	Stuart Evans
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2006
School address	Carnforth Road Bromsgrove B60 2HS
Telephone number	01527 872938
Fax number	01527 836448
Email address	office@finstall.worcs.sch.uk

Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Anna Coyle

Additional inspector

Richard Barnard

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 12 teachers. In addition, the inspectors observed the breakfast club. Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school at work, talked to different groups of pupils and listened to them reading. They also took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and looked at a range of documentation including safeguarding policies, improvement plans, samples of pupils' work, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' progress. The inspectors analysed the questionnaire responses from 188 parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Finstall First School is larger than most other schools of its type. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportions of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds; very few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has the Active Mark and the Eco Schools Green Flag awards and Healthy Schools status.

A breakfast club operates on the school site, which is managed by the governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Finstall First School is a good school that provides its pupils with a well-rounded education. It is good, rather than outstanding, because teaching is not always good or better. The curriculum is focused well on the development of pupils’ skills and enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These contribute well to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Achievement is good. From above average starting points, pupils’ attainment is well above that expected for age by the end of Year 4. Progress is good year on year, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so that pupils increase their skills effectively during their time in the school.
- As a result of teaching that is mainly good and sometimes outstanding, pupils learn effectively. Teachers cater well for pupils and convey high expectations. Imaginative themes lead to high levels of pupils’ interest and engagement. Occasionally, teaching is less good when the pace of learning is too slow and lessons lack sufficient challenge.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say that they feel safe when they are at school. They are polite and courteous. Attendance is well above the national average. The very large majority of parents and carers are pleased with the education provided for their children.
- Leaders, managers and the governing body have made improvements to the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher has secured a strong team of dedicated teachers who support him and the deputy headteacher well. Together, they are focused on the right priorities to manage the school’s performance and maintain its capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Ensure that the quality of teaching is always good or better by:
 - making sure that all lessons contain sufficient challenge to enable pupils to achieve well
 - making sure that lessons are well paced to maximise learning.

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Main report

Achievement of pupils

From higher than the expected starting points on entry, children in the reception classes reach above average levels as they start Year 1. Consistently good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children have firm foundations for their future learning. The strong emphasis on developing children's speaking, listening and social skills is particularly successful. The highly colourful and well-organised learning environment in the reception classes provides children with a wide range of creative opportunities to develop their skills. For example, children help to plan their activities and share their ideas with staff. Adults model language well and teach the links between letters and the sounds regularly and systematically. As a result, children's early reading skills are particularly well developed, and they learn to communicate well with each other and with their teachers.

Standards of reading are well above average at the end of Year 2 and they are very high by the time pupils leave the school. Similarly, standards in writing and mathematics are well above the age-related expectations by the end of Year 4. Pupils show positive and mature attitudes to their work and their progress is good. In the majority of lessons observed by the inspectors, they were well-motivated and made good use of computers to develop independent learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on writing a letter about the 'Big Bad Wolf' pupils expressed their feelings of dismay and sorrow to Little Red Riding Hood. This made an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the quality of the support they receive is targeted well. This is because teaching assistants are proficient in guiding pupils and use every opportunity to build their confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they achieve well.

Parents and carers are accurate in their views about the good progress their children make. The school effectively promotes equality by narrowing the gap between the highest and lowest attaining pupils and ensuring that all groups achieve equally well. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good because pupils receive a broad range of learning opportunities over

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time. The majority of teachers have high expectations and make these clear to pupils so that they know what is expected of them. In the best lessons, some of which are outstanding, there are high levels of interest and participation among pupils. Occasionally, when teaching is less good, the pace of learning is too slow and pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks. Nevertheless, most teachers use assessment well to plan work which is well matched to the needs of all pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are integrated well. For example, in a Year 4 imaginative mathematics lesson on weighing and measuring vegetables for animals, pupils made rapid progress because the class teacher was skilled in structuring tasks carefully and used probing questions. Pupils were clearly excited and enthused and this contributed well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Marking is an area of strength that has improved since the previous inspection. It is consistently good and, in some instances, of an exceptionally high standard, especially in English. Teachers are very aware of their pupils' capabilities. They plan effectively to build on prior learning and show pupils how to improve their skills. Teaching assistants are deployed well in a variety of roles so that many pupils benefit from their skilled support.

A very large majority of parents and carers are confident that their children are taught well and that the school is meeting pupils' needs. The inspection evidence shows that their views are accurate.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils is good and all say that they feel safe at school. Attendance is well above the national average and pupils are consistently punctual to lessons. Pupils' good behaviour makes an effective contribution to learning in lessons and the school's management of behaviour is successful in the vast majority of cases. Around the school, almost all pupils are respectful and very well mannered, and they respond extremely positively to guidance from adults. A few pupils do not think that behaviour is good in lessons and some say that there are occasional incidents of name-calling and bullying. The inspectors followed up their concerns and found that this was mainly due to the behaviour of a very small number of pupils. The school has good, clear strategies for managing pupils' behaviour which it uses effectively. Pupils' understanding of the different forms of bullying is also good. Pupils' behaviour is sometimes exemplary, and especially when they show mature, sensible attitudes. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said their children feel safe at school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe at work and at play and also on the internet. Most parents and carers are happy with the school and the large majority are satisfied that the school deals effectively with pupils' behaviour.

Leadership and management

The senior leadership team and the governing body have improved the school's

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effectiveness since the previous inspection through regular training for teachers and close links with other schools. Their track record demonstrates the school's capacity for continued improvement. A key factor is the commitment of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, who have established a shared vision for the school. They measure the impact of initiatives rigorously and demonstrate the effectiveness of their leadership well by maintaining the school's high standards of attainment in English and mathematics. Good quality staff training has a strong impact on all aspects of the school's work. For example, it has had a good effect on developing teachers' skills in the teaching of phonics. The school development plan's detailed priorities for improvement are based on effective self-evaluation, and leaders at all levels regularly monitor and evaluate their work and the work of their colleagues. Staff morale is high because teaching and support staff feel valued. Members of the governing body provide good levels of expertise, challenge and support for the school. The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures fully meet government requirements.

The school provides a broad and balanced range of curricular activities, clearly focused on using and applying pupils' skills. The interesting and innovative curriculum adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school. For example, projects, such as creating banners and researching topics, promote pupils' key skills well because they combine learning across different subjects. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by the wide range of sports, music and art activities. Assemblies make a strong contribution towards pupils' spiritual development. The school is wholly committed to equality of opportunity and tracks the performance of different groups of pupils rigorously in English and mathematics. Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are identified early and are supported well through a wide range of intervention programmes so that they make good progress in line with their peers.

The school environment is colourful and inviting. It makes good use of its attractive outdoor areas and playgrounds, including the field and fenced areas. The school is an inclusive community where staff have good knowledge of individual pupils and their families. Parents and carers are positive about most aspects of the school's work. They say that teachers are approachable and that the school 'builds a good sense of community'. Pupils show a mature sense of responsibility in looking after the environment and in being part of the Eco school focus.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Finstall First School, Bromsgrove, B60 2HS

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed seeing how you learn and listening to your views. Those of you who were kind enough to speak to us clearly enjoy coming to school.

We found that you go to a good school. You make good progress so that you reach much higher levels than those found in most other primary schools. This is because of the good teaching you receive. You behave well and show good attitudes to learning. In your questionnaires, a few of you thought that behaviour was not always good. When we talked to you about what behaviour was like most of the time, you explained this was only very occasionally. You told us that you particularly enjoy the wide range of after school clubs that help you develop skills for the future.

Your headteacher, staff and governing body work hard to make improvements to the school, and manage it well. However, not all teaching is of the best quality and so we have asked the school to improve this.

You can help too by continuing to enjoy school and working hard. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Anna Coyle
Lead inspector

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