

Forest Town Primary School

Clipstone Road West, Forest Town, Mansfield, NG19 0ED

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Teaching is good overall and some of it is outstanding.
- Almost all the pupils make good or better progress and learn well in their lessons.
- The school has used its funding to provide additional support for pupils in small groups and this has improved standards, particularly in reading.
- Pupils enjoy school because the lessons are made interesting and fun. Attendance rates have improved for the last three years and are now in line with the national average.
- Pupils behave well, say they feel safe and are cared for well.
- The headteacher leads the school effectively and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, the wider school leadership team and all the staff.
- The regular checks and other advice given to teachers by leaders have led to significant improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school because they regularly check on how well it is doing. They provide a good balance of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment is improving rapidly but has still not reached national averages.
- Not all teachers check carefully enough in lessons how well pupils have understood what they are learning
- Not all teachers provide enough time in lessons for pupils to respond to teachers' marking and other guidance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. Every class was observed at least once.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, several staff members, including senior and middle leaders, and there was a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents' views were sought through discussions at the start and end of the school day and following a class street dance display.
- Inspectors also took account of the 19 questionnaires completed by members of the school staff.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and the minutes of various meetings.
- Inspectors also listened to groups of pupils read and observed pupils working in small groups.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

Sumeya Bhikhu

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Nearly all the pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional funding provided for children in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals (the pupil premium), is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs supported through 'school action' is above average. The proportion supported at 'school action plus' or who have a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- One pupil has part of his educational provision provided elsewhere and attends Forest Town Primary School part-time.
- The school has a nurture group that is based in an adjacent building known as The Tree House.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2012, but the evidence collected during the inspection indicates that the floor standards will be exceeded this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise levels of attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - making sure that pupils are clear about the next steps in improving their work in both subjects
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to respond to the teachers' marking and guidance
 - ensuring leaders check carefully on the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the results of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- Make sure that all teaching is at least good by July 2013 by ensuring all teachers:
 - check regularly on pupils' understanding and accuracy in lessons
 - set aside more time in lessons for pupils to work independently at activities that are demanding and require thought
 - sharing the good and outstanding practice already evident in school so that the teachers can learn from each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good.

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skill and knowledge well below those expected for their age. The teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is particularly good and so children settle well into school life and make good progress, particularly in communication and language skills and social development.
- The pupils build on this good start and now make good progress across all year groups in English and mathematics because the teachers are able to motivate the pupils through their enthusiasm and high expectations.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' progress in reading is particularly good. Pupils say that they really enjoy reading and most have real confidence in their reading ability.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because the staff check their progress closely. The work is set at the right level and they receive good-quality support from well-trained teaching assistants and teachers.
- Pupils know their targets in reading, writing and mathematics. When used well, these focus pupils' efforts and contribute well to their progress. However, the use of targets remains inconsistent in some classes and in some classes the targets are not specific enough.
- The school's leadership is using the pupil premium funding to provide additional support for individuals and small groups of pupils who are eligible for this help, and the progress of these pupils is improving. However any gaps in their results compared to their classmates have still not closed enough.
- The large majority of parents responding to the online questionnaire believe that their children make good progress. This was also evident from discussions with parents, many of whom commented on the recent improvements.

The quality of teaching is good.

- Some teaching is outstanding and much is good. Checks on teaching have improved it to the point where pupils' progress and attainment are rising. Most teachers set work that is difficult enough to make their pupils think. In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and the teachers use probing questions that make the pupils think carefully about their answers. This was very evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson where the higher ability pupils were solving complex problems involving multiplication.
- Most teachers plan work for the pupils that is interesting and enjoyable, and which motivates them to learn well. Teachers expect the best of pupils, particularly in terms of behaviour. Pupils responded enthusiastically, for example, in an outstanding literacy lesson in a Year 1 and Year 2 class where the pupils listened to a tape of woodland sounds designed to fire their imaginations before writing about their memories of the trip to Sherwood Forest.

- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not give sufficient time for the pupils to work by themselves independently of the teacher. Not all teachers check frequently enough in lessons that all pupils, particularly the less able, are completing their work accurately and with full understanding.
- Relationships are a real strength and the teachers treat the older pupils as mature individuals, encouraging them to take on additional responsibility for their own work, especially in the good amount of effort put into their homework.
- Marking has been improved and is now providing guidance to pupils more consistently. In one or two classes, however, the teachers are not providing enough opportunities for pupils to respond to the teachers' comments on how to improve their work.
- Teaching very effectively promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils work well together, value the opinions of others and show good awareness of other cultures.
- Careful planning ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well, often in small groups led by very effective teachers and teaching assistants.
- From responses to the online survey and discussions during the inspection, it is clear that parents are very pleased with the teaching in the school. As one parent said: 'The teachers bend over backwards to help our children, especially with their reading.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to do well and enjoy what they do. This means that behaviour in lessons is consistently good.
- Pupils are kindly, considerate, polite and courteous and made the inspection team feel very welcome. The behavioural records confirm that this is the case over time too. As one child said, 'The school is like one big, massive family.'
- Pupils who attend the Tree House nurture group sessions are encouraged to develop positive attitudes which help them in their work in class.
- At lunch times many of the older pupils enjoy taking on the additional responsibility of supervising and playing with the younger pupils. This leads to a very happy atmosphere on the playgrounds.
- Pupils understand the various forms of bullying but say that they feel safe in school and bullying in any form is very rare indeed and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. Pupils are clear about possible dangers of the internet and know how to stay safe when using it.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have worked closely with parents to improve attendance. As a result punctuality and attendance rates have improved for the last three years and are now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management are good.

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governing body, provide a clear direction for the school. A rigorous programme of checks on the teaching and learning taking place has led to sustained improvement and so the pupils are now achieving consistently high levels of progress throughout the school. Decisions about pay rates are based on the quality of teaching.
- Leadership and management responsibilities have been extended very successfully to more staff. This aspect of broader leadership is now a strength of the school because all staff are now regularly checking on the progress pupils make. Teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe each other to make the most of the good and outstanding practice that already exists within the school.
- The senior leaders and subject leaders keep a close watch on how pupils make progress. They hold meetings regularly with all the teachers to identify those pupils who are falling behind and to give an extra boost to their learning in smaller groups with adult support.
- The range of subjects and activities provided for pupils make for consistently enjoyable learning and pupils are therefore engaged in their work. Opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills when studying other subjects have improved through the use of the topic themes and initiatives such as 'The Book Bug Club'. The good use of visits and the good range of clubs and activities enrich the work the pupils undertake and also help to broaden pupils' experiences.
- The school has worked hard to engage parents in their child's learning and from conversations with parents who attended the street dance display it is clear that parents appreciate this.
- The school has established valuable partnerships with other locality schools and outside support agencies to improve learning experiences for all the pupils.
- The local authority has provided positive support to the school over time, through annual review meetings and, following the last inspection, in joint working to support the leadership in improving the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they are working closely with staff to make the school even better. They have supported the school in improving teaching and, as a result, in improving progress in literacy and numeracy. Systems are in place for the approval of pay rises so that these are tied to how well staff are doing. They also understand the performance data and how this school compares with others. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium funding has been used and are aware of the need to monitor this closely to check that gaps in performance are closing. The safeguarding, health and safety of pupils, including checks on staff appointments, are good because staff and governors have received the appropriate training. Governors work closely with school leaders and staff to ensure that all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination. Governors also regularly attend professional training to improve their practice further.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	130255
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	406373

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Godson
Headteacher	Garry Ineson
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2011
Telephone number	01623 477211
Fax number	01623 447221
Email address	office@foresttown.notts.sch.uk

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