

The Ferncumbe CofE Primary School

The Green, Hatton, Warwick, CV35 7EX

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Provision in the early years is outstanding. Children make rapid progress as a result of high-quality teaching.
- The school makes innovative use of new technologies and social media to involve parents in their children's learning in the early years.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and how well they will behave.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They concentrate exceptionally well in lessons and persevere with difficult tasks.
- Pupils play a leading role in deciding how topics are taught, which leads to very high levels of engagement and enjoyment in lessons.
- Disabled pupils receive very effective support from teaching assistants, which enables them to play a full part in the life of the school.
- The school goes far beyond its statutory duties in its work to keep pupils safe.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected as a result of strong leadership from the headteacher, her deputy and governors.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are frequent and accurate. They allow the school's leaders to quickly tackle any weaknesses so that teaching is continually improved.
- Governance is outstanding. Governors are extremely analytical and knowledgeable about the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils make too many errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, which teachers do not always check and correct.
- Changes in personnel have led to weaknesses in the management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs. Records have not been kept up to date and pupils have been removed from the register before they are ready.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, including four seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 65 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. He spoke with parents informally and also considered the views that parents expressed in the school's own questionnaire, as well as in letters and emails sent directly to the inspector.
- The inspector observed the school's work, including arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- Around one in 10 pupils is supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after children); this proportion is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The person responsible for the management of special educational needs provision has changed three times in the last year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar by ensuring that all teachers consistently point out and correct any errors in pupils' written work.
- Improve the leadership and management of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by ensuring that:
 - procedures are in place to allow smoother transition when there is a change of special educational needs coordinator
 - pupils are not removed from the register of special educational needs before they are ready
 - records of pupils' progress are kept up to date.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, has ensured that the school has made good progress since it was last inspected. The strengths in performance from that time have been maintained and there have been significant improvements in areas such as the early years, where provision is now outstanding.
- The school's leaders have ensured a great deal of consistency in the quality of teaching. A common approach to the way lessons are planned and how pupils are assessed, for example, has been developed by sharing the strengths in teaching that are identified through checks on lessons.
- Checks on the quality of individual teachers' lessons are frequent and provide an accurate view of the effectiveness of teaching. Leaders are ambitious and set high expectations. Even outstanding lessons have areas for improvement identified, so that all teachers continually strive to improve. Any weaknesses are quickly tackled, and performance management procedures are applied rigorously in order to deal with any teachers who are unable to respond to the support they are offered.
- The curriculum goes well beyond that which is required by statute. One hour each week, for example, is devoted to learning a new skill that will serve pupils well in their later life. All learn to play a musical instrument, sew and bake, for example. Pupils find the curriculum highly engaging because they plan the activities that they would like to do, after being told what they will be learning about. When told they would be learning about weather, for example, pupils decided to produce their own video weather forecasts to demonstrate their understanding.
- The school provides outstandingly well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's rules emphasise that behaviour is a matter of choice for the individual, and the school is highly successful in teaching pupils how to make the right choices from an early age, so that they gain a strong understanding of right and wrong. As a result, the school is a very calm, orderly and happy place to learn.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They are taught to respect and value the differences between individuals. They demonstrate great regard for the views of others and argue their points constructively in discussions. Pupils are highly appreciative of others' efforts, as shown by the warm applause and praise offered to classes performing poetry in assembly. Pupils have a very good understanding of the working of democratic systems, through visits to Westminster and 'voting' on topics by leaving the hall through different doors, for example.
- The school's leaders go to great lengths to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to excel in school and that none are discriminated against. This is particularly noticeable in the provision for disabled pupils, where extra specially adapted equipment allows them to join in sport, play with their friends at break and work in comfort in lessons. Their very presence also sends a strong message to others that disability is no barrier to high achievement.
- Pupil premium funds have been used effectively to ensure that any pupils who have previously fallen behind receive the extra support that they need to catch up.
- Extra funding for primary sport has also been used well. Pupils have been taught new sports, such as golf and hockey, and have received specialist coaching in sports such as soccer and athletics. The latter has been particularly successful, with many pupils winning medals at recent events.
- Procedures for keeping pupils safe are particularly strong. The school goes to great lengths to keep pupils on the school's roll when they do not attend, for example, so that the school's leaders can still keep a close eye on what is happening to them and, where necessary, raise concerns with other relevant authorities.
- Teachers responsible for managing subjects carry out their roles well. They check the quality of teaching and identify aspects that could be better to ensure that provision is improved.

- The school makes innovative use of social media to keep parents well-informed about their children's activities during the day. Such use of new technology is exceptionally good in the early years.
- Leaders have not planned well enough for changes in staffing where teachers hold posts of responsibility. In particular, the changes in coordinator for special educational needs have led to a lack of continuity. Records of pupils' progress have not been kept up to date, so senior staff are not always clear about how well such pupils have achieved.
- The local authority has provided very little support for the school, as it views it as an effective school.

The governance of the school:

- Governance is outstanding. Governors are highly knowledgeable about the school's performance. They analyse data in great detail and formally observe lessons twice each year to find out for themselves the features of teaching that lead to any differences in the progress of pupils across classes. Governors use the information they gather to question and challenge the headteacher, while providing total support when needed. They do not flinch from taking difficult decisions about staffing and always put the pupils' education first. Governors have a deep understanding of how teachers' performance is managed. They ensure that only the most effective teachers receive pay awards and that weaker teachers are supported to improve.
- Governors have high expectations that pupils will behave and treat each other well at all times; they visit the school to check that this is the case. Governors keep a close eye on finances and ensure that the spending of extra funds, such as the pupil premium and sports funding, is effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In lessons, pupils work hard and concentrate fully for the whole duration. Good attitudes to learning are encouraged as soon as children start in Reception. They learn to listen to each other and to help when their 'learning partner' has a problem. All pupils take a great pride in their work and always try their best.
- By Year 1, pupils persevere when faced with difficult tasks and, by Year 6, they demonstrate great enthusiasm to get their teeth into longer projects and tasks that tax their abilities. They choose their homework, for example, and invariably decide to carry out extended research and presentation on topics that take them hours of work at home.
- Pupils very much enjoy their lessons because they are given opportunities to decide on the activities that they will do. When teachers explained to them that they needed to improve mental arithmetic skills, for example, it was the pupils who decided to turn the lessons into a competition called 'M-Factor', where improvements in skills meant earning badges, which all pupils wear with pride.
- Other indicators of pupils' excellent work ethic are observed each morning. Many pupils arrive early at school so that they can start work. Almost all Year 1 pupils were practising their handwriting before school during the inspection, and this is common practice.
- Outside of lessons, pupils are courteous, polite, friendly and helpful. They open doors for one another, check whether visitors need any help and keep a close eye on younger ones in the playground. Children in Reception have 'buddies' in Year 6, for example, who play hide and seek with them at break, read to them and become their 'new best friend in school'. The younger children look up to the older pupils and learn from their excellent attitudes and behaviour.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare and there have been no exclusions since the previous inspection.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils justifiably feel very safe in school. Leaders ensure that all staff and volunteers are thoroughly vetted before working with children.
- The school goes far beyond meeting its statutory requirements for keeping safe. Pupils who are considered to be at risk are tracked and monitored, even when they have left the area until the school has confirmation that they have started at a new school. A wide range of other agencies are informed as soon as any concerns arise.
- All pupils are taught how to recognise inappropriate behaviour from other children and adults, and what to do if they are worried. They know that they have the right to be kept safe and free from discrimination.
- Learning about how to stay safe starts in the early years, where children learn about fire safety. As they move up the school, pupils are taught how to keep safe in a wide range of situations, such as near water and on the roads. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the dangers of using social media and how to avoid them.
- Bullying is almost unknown at the school. Even the most minor falling out is taken seriously by staff and pupils helped to become friends again.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers plan tasks that make pupils think hard. Lessons are planned so that tasks become increasingly more difficult as the lesson continues. Pupils learn a new skill and then apply it, before quickly moving on to something more difficult. In this way, they are continually making progress, especially in mathematics and writing. The best examples of such an approach are evident in Reception, where children's progress is outstanding.
- Many of the tasks involve solving problems. In literacy, for example, pupils in Year 6 started a lesson with a series of short tasks that asked them to write a sentence linking two objects, such as a fish and a bicycle, that started with an adverb. This was followed by one that started with a preposition. The task made pupils think about the nomenclature and successfully helped them to develop imaginative sentences.
- Many topics make use of the outdoors and real-life contexts. Pupils grow their own vegetables, for example, and run their own farmers' market, learning how to manage finances and the importance of quality and value to the consumer. All pupils learn French, and use their skills when organising a French café.
- No time is wasted in lessons. Teachers have tasks ready and waiting for when pupils arrive back from breaks, for example, so pupils know that they have to get straight down to work.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, and especially for those with disabilities or medical conditions. They have built up strong relationships with disabled pupils, so know when they are uncomfortable, for example, and when to give them specially adapted resources to help them play a full part in lessons.
- The teaching of early reading in Reception is so successful that almost all pupils are reading very well for their age by the time that they start Year 1. Teachers throughout the school track very carefully the books that pupils read. They ensure that the books get progressively more difficult over time, while taking account of pupils' interests, so that pupils are exposed to new vocabulary and different genres.
- There is a great deal of consistency in the way that lessons are conducted. Pupils know the expectations that teachers have for good behaviour and hard work. All teachers use quick-fire questioning to random pupils, which ensures that pupils' attention is always fully focused on the teacher.
- One aspect that is not consistent is the way that pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are marked

and promoted. Teachers do not all routinely remind pupils to use full stops or commas, for example. Errors in spelling and punctuation are not always identified and corrected in written work, especially in subjects other than English.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 6. The progress made by children in Reception is outstanding.
- In the recent past, pupils have started Year 1 with standards that were above average. They make consistently good progress and standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently well above average.
- Several of the most-able pupils leave the school during Key Stage 2, often to join independent schools, so the starting points of the remaining pupils are lower than those indicated by Key Stage 1 test results. Nevertheless, pupils' good progress continues and they leave the school with standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is good in many other subjects too, notably music, French, and information and communication technology.
- There are very few differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils make equally as good progress as other pupils in the school. There were too few such pupils in Year 6 in 2014 to comment on their attainment without identifying individuals.
- The most-able pupils also make good progress, especially so in mathematics and writing. They rise to the challenge of the difficult tasks they are given and work well in pairs or small groups to collaborate on projects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants explain tasks when necessary but they make sure that the pupils do the work for themselves. Many of the disabled pupils or those with medical needs spend long periods in hospital. The school is careful to keep track of their progress while they are absent from school so that they can pick up straight away from where they left off.
- A very small number of pupils have been removed from the register of pupils with special educational needs before they are ready. Although these pupils have made good progress in mathematics and writing, they lag behind others in reading.
- Pupils' standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar were average in Year 6 in 2014, which represented progress that was not as good as that in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are higher for the current pupils in Year 6, and they have made good progress. However, progress in other years is inconsistent and still not as good as that in other subjects.

The early years provision is outstanding

- Children make outstanding progress across all areas of learning. They join the school with knowledge and skills that are already better than is typical for their age. Standards on leaving Reception have been improving rapidly in the last two years and are now very high indeed, so children are exceptionally well equipped to start Year 1.
- On starting school, most children can write their name and form letters legibly. They can count to five or more, but often write numbers incorrectly. By Christmas, children are writing shopping lists for parties, including words such as 'syrup', which are spelt correctly. By the end of the year, they are laying out subtraction sums and using them to solve problems.
- There are two main reasons for the outstanding education provided: the way that assessments are used to plan lessons for individual children and the involvement of parents in their children's learning. Both make innovative use of new technology.

- In every lesson, staff use tablet computers and specially written programs to assess and record children's achievements. They analyse the results after school each day and plan activities for individual children that will build on what they have done the previous day. In this way, children learn and make good progress in every lesson and activity. Over time, this builds to outstanding levels of achievement.
- Staff provide very subtle guidance for children, so that they want to choose the activities that the staff have planned for them. The teacher asks 'Who wants to write a poster for bonfire night?', for example, and lots of hands go up. The teacher then only chooses those for whom the activity was planned, before quickly moving on to the next activity and doing the same, while always presenting it in such a way that generates great enthusiasm among the children.
- Parents, without exception, talk in glowing terms about the education their children receive. The assessments of children build up into a comprehensive record of their achievements, which is shared electronically with parents. In addition, images of the day's activities are circulated over social media so that parents can discuss them with their children when they get home from school. Every week, a list of homework is sent home, which contains activities for parents to do with their children. This helps children to learn at home.
- In addition to their academic achievement, children are also exceptionally well prepared for Year 1 in terms of their excellent attitudes and behaviour. Rules are applied consistently and children quickly come to understand the importance of listening to others and trying their best. Children always have something to do and never drift from one activity to another.
- Excellent leadership that is exceptionally well focused on addressing any weaknesses is ensuring rapid improvement.

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	125687
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	448574

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Sloan
Headteacher	Sally Morris
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2009
Telephone number	01926 484318
Fax number	01926 484318
Email address	admin3210@welearn365.com

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