

Firs Farm Primary School

Rayleigh Road, Palmers Green, London, Middlesex N13 5QP

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2019

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	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership is good. The recently appointed headteacher has made sure that the key issues facing the school are identified and are being tackled. As a result, teaching has improved and standards have risen.
- From their different starting points, all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Pupils make stronger progress in writing and mathematics than in reading. Nevertheless, the quality of writing in the foundation subjects does not match the high standard seen in English.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Parents and carers are happy about the support their children receive.
- Leaders and teachers have been successful in helping pupils eligible for pupil premium funding to make good progress.
- Some children enter Reception with skills and abilities well below the levels expected for their ages. They make good progress, and this provides a good start for key stage 1.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils greatly enjoy the topics planned for them. Pupils get lots of opportunities to work together and do so willingly. They are polite and courteous to adults and one another.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra activities. The quality of sport and physical education is good and helps pupils to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles.
- Parents and pupils appreciate the school's welcoming atmosphere. This, with the curriculum, strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The curriculum inspires pupils to learn well. However, leaders recognise the need for further development so that pupils excel in all subjects and deepen their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Governors support the school's leaders very well. They carry out their role effectively and provide a good balance of support and challenge to the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by undertaking a review and refinement of the curriculum to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills across subjects.
- Strengthen pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum matches the high standards in English lessons
 - teachers have even higher expectations of all pupils' presentation and quality of written work
 - pupils' handwriting is improved so that they write in a fluent, joined, legible style.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school well. Effective strategies for school improvement, accurate self-assessment, focused professional development and an ambitious and shared vision demonstrate the school's strong capacity to improve further.
- Leaders use a range of systems to monitor and check the quality of teaching across the school. Staff are provided with incisive feedback and support to improve their practice. They value the opportunities to work with others and gain from the experience. As a result of this well-targeted training, staff have quickly developed their skills and understanding. This includes those who have recently joined the school.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of their school and take swift action to address any concerns. They make good use of all the information they have about pupils to support their individual needs and help them achieve well.
- Helped by highly effective teamwork from the whole staff, the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics continues to improve. Leaders now make sure that the assessments of pupils' work are accurate and use them well to check pupils' progress as they move through the school.
- Senior leaders are particularly adept at evaluating how well particular support strategies are working. Regular pupil-progress meetings enable senior leaders to discuss with teachers each pupil's progress and identify strategies to support any pupils who need more support. This ensures that help is identified and put in place quickly.
- When the additional support provided to a pupil is not having rapid impact, it is quickly changed or adapted. This means that the particular needs of pupils are met well, including those with SEND, those who speak English as an additional language and vulnerable pupils.
- The curriculum is organised and provides interesting activities which pupils enjoy. Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' social, physical and music skills. Leaders rightly recognise that further work is needed to develop the curriculum so that there is planned progression in science and across the wider curriculum.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils where needed, both in classrooms and in developing their emotional and social skills. Consequently, these pupils grow in confidence and make good progress.
- Effective use of the primary sport premium funding leads to increased participation for all pupils and the development of staff expertise in the teaching of physical education.
- Pupils have a good understanding of British values, including democracy, respect and the rule of law. These are promoted well through school assemblies and through the school's own values. Pupils demonstrate respect and tolerance for those from other backgrounds and beliefs. They say that all pupils are treated equally and that discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated.
- Parents support the school very enthusiastically. They overwhelmingly feel happy with the improvements in the school and say that the school's leaders are successful. They

consider their children to be happy at school and well looked after. The school's website provides a wealth of useful information for parents.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. They are well informed by school leaders. Governors' extensive experience is used well and gives them a good basis for asking relevant questions about the school's performance. Consequently, they are able to gauge what progress is being made towards the school's key priorities for improvement. Governing body minutes show that governors provide the headteacher and leaders with a high level of challenge.
- Governors enjoy visiting the school to see for themselves how well pupils are learning. They relish participating in school events and explained how much they enjoyed talking to pupils about their learning.
- Governors take their responsibility to safeguard pupils seriously and have ensured that the updated safeguarding guidance has been implemented quickly to keep pupils as safe as possible. They check that the additional funding to support pupils with SEND, and that for disadvantaged pupils, is used effectively to help these groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a culture of safeguarding around the school. All staff are vigilant in their care of the pupils who attend Firs Farm Primary School. Leaders' rigorous checking processes ensure that only adults that are safe to work with pupils are employed by the school. All staff receive annual safeguarding training as well as frequent updates.
- There are clear and accountable safeguarding practices in the school. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They take all safeguarding concerns seriously and follow the correct procedures.
- Leaders of safeguarding liaise positively with staff and governors as well as with professionals from external agencies. Safeguarding leaders manage the detailed system for recording concerns and follow up actions effectively. They ensure that they make relevant and timely checks on all staff, governors and volunteers, as well as visitors to the school.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. Parents who spoke to inspectors agreed that their children are safe in school.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate risk assessments are carried out for the school site and for educational visits.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. Any weaknesses in teaching are tackled, and good support is given to teachers, including those new to the school, to help them to continue to improve.
- Teachers know their pupils well and provide learning activities that build on what they already know and understand. Teachers usually link learning to the previous lesson and so pupils build their skills and knowledge systematically. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils' writing has been a recent focus for development. The impact of staff training was seen both in pupils' English books and in lessons, with pupils making good use of technical vocabulary and achieving depth in their descriptive writing. However, teachers are not consistent in their expectations for the same quality of writing in science and other subjects.
- The teaching of reading is good because of teachers' focus on extending pupils' vocabulary and careful monitoring of their reading progress. Pupils often read out loud during lessons. This is helping them to develop into confident and able readers.
- Mathematics is taught with confidence, enabling pupils to use a range of methods to solve problems.
- The teaching of phonics is well organised and means that pupils become confident readers. It also contributes well towards their improved writing. The use of engaging texts makes younger pupils enthusiastic about learning to read.
- Teaching assistants are used well in class to help pupils to organise their work, stay focused and access their tasks. Teaching assistants feel confident to try new things and work closely with teachers to develop plans and assess pupils' understanding. Consequently, pupils, particularly those with SEND, make strong progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are very respectful of one another. They have friendship groups across ethnic, religious, social and cultural boundaries and enjoy learning about each other's lives. Typical of others, one pupil said, 'Everyone is respectful, no one is left out and it's a really nice place to be in.'
- Pupils enjoy the roles and responsibilities they are given. They take these seriously and recognise the importance of their work. For example, pupils explained how decisions made at the school council have improved their enjoyment of school. An example of this is the additional play equipment provided at lunchtime.
- Pupils feel safe. The school's displays reflect an emphasis on care and support for pupils. Through the curriculum, they learn how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations. Pupils trust school staff to take rapid and appropriate action to resolve any concerns they have. There are secure boxes that they can use to post any

concerns. Records show that staff deal effectively with any instances of bullying or derogatory language.

- Leaders have established effective systems to monitor and support pupils and their families who may be vulnerable. In addition, the strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum helps all pupils to express and manage their feelings. Consequently, any worries are dealt with quickly and pupils thrive.
- The school ensures that pupils are aware of how to stay safe and behave responsibly when using technology. Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and staying fit. A wide range of sporting activities during and after school support them to do this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show good attitudes towards learning and these have a positive impact on the progress they make. Pupils work hard to complete their work and usually strive to please their teachers. They listen attentively in lessons and contribute very enthusiastically and purposefully to class discussion, and when exchanging ideas in pairs with their 'talk partners'. However there are times when they do not make the effort to present their work neatly.
- Pupils say that behaviour is almost always good. Very occasionally, when a few pupils let themselves down, the school's systems work well to remind them of what is expected. Around school, pupils are very polite and courteous, and they enjoy chatting to visitors about their learning. They speak very proudly about their school. Parents also expressed very positive views about the school and had no concerns.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and say that it rarely happens. They have confidence in the staff and trust them to sort out issues on the rare occasions when there are problems. The school's behaviour logs show that incidents are rare. Staff deal with matters swiftly and thoroughly.
- Attendance has recently been a focus for improvement and is now above the national average. During the last year, the school has addressed poor levels of attendance very successfully. There has been a determined effort to work with parents to ensure that their children attend school. Leaders continue to send out very clear messages about the importance of being in school, every day and on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils at Firs Farm Primary School make at least good progress from their different starting points throughout the school. Some pupils make very strong progress in most year groups.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 was above the national averages in writing and mathematics and slightly below in reading. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points.
- Outcomes in phonics are consistently strong. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is above the national average.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2018, pupils' attainment was above average in reading and writing and slightly below average in mathematics. This represented considerable improvement on the previous year. Pupils' progress in reading and writing was much stronger than in mathematics.
- Current pupils are making good progress. In English, Year 6 pupils discuss confidently and write using accurate technical language and detailed description. Pupils talk about their reading, showing the ability to compare texts, identify key features and challenge different perspectives. In mathematics, pupils demonstrate good reasoning skills, for example in working with fractions and percentages.
- Pupils with SEND are given effective support and make strong progress throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported because adults are often very well informed about how to help these pupils. Consequently, these pupils make good progress. As their confidence and understanding of English develop, their progress in other subjects also strengthens rapidly.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make the same good progress as other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good, with an accurate understanding of the strengths of provision and well-founded plans for further improvement. The staff work closely as a team and they know the children well. All statutory requirements are met and children are safe.
- An increasing proportion of children start Reception with lower skills and knowledge than normally expected for their age. Children make good progress from their starting points, achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year and are ready for Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan learning that interests children and systematically promotes the development of basic skills. Staff use their secure subject knowledge to test children's understanding. When children make mistakes in their writing or speech, staff notice quickly and help to correct errors.
- Well-planned and purposeful play helps children to learn. Adults ask questions and encourage conversations about the activities the children are enjoying. Children enjoy working together and demonstrated this at all times.
- Children with SEND and those eligible for pupil premium funding are included fully. They are well supported in their learning and so they do well.
- Adults are vigilant. They make sure that the children feel safe and are kept safe. Well-considered risk assessments for activities reflect staff's vigilance in this important work. Children move between indoor and outdoor areas and use equipment safely. They show a high level of personal and social skills, cooperating with each other to become independent learners.
- Parents appreciate the warmth of the school staff. The school's strong focus on children's personal and social development helps them to settle quickly into school life.

School details

Unique reference number	101989
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10058997

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair (interim)	Corinne David
Headteacher	Nuala Husband
Telephone number	0208 807 4292
Website	www.firsfarm.enfield.sch.uk
Email address	office@firsfarm.enfield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 June 2009

Information about this school

- Since the inspection of the school in June 2009, the school has had several changes in leadership and staffing.
- Firs Farm Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background, with pupils from any other White background forming the next sizeable ethnic group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classrooms alongside school leaders, and additionally observed intervention groups.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, teachers and groups of pupils. Inspectors met with the headteacher, the interim chair of the governing body and the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors worked in partnership with the school's senior leaders when analysing information about the school. The inspectors looked at pupils' outcomes, the school's evaluation of its own performance, minutes from governing body meetings, the school development plan, and monitoring and evaluation records. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspectors walked around the school with pupils to find out more about their work from displays and extra-curricular activities. Inspectors interviewed groups of children from across the school to determine their views on behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground at playtime and in the lunch hall. They listened to pupils read and looked at work in pupils' books, alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents by analysing the school's own evaluation of parent response to a questionnaire as well as speaking informally to parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

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Jeff Cole	Ofsted Inspector

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