

# Finstall First School

Carnforth Road, Bromsgrove, B60 2HS

**Inspection dates** 21–22 April 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Strong leadership and management have greatly improved teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The headteacher, governors and staff work together as an extremely effective team. They focus relentlessly on ensuring that pupils' achievement and personal development are excellent.
- Leaders check pupils' progress rigorously and accurately. The staff team takes swift action to help any pupils who are not doing as well as they should, so all make outstanding progress.
- Standards are consistently high in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make an excellent start to school in the early years. The high quality of education in the Reception classes means children are very safe and happy there. They achieve extremely well in all areas of learning.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. They successfully challenge them to attain as well as they can.
- Teachers keep a very close eye on pupils' progress in lessons. They provide very quick help to anyone who is confused, and challenge those who are successful to do even better.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is good and helps them to improve. Leaders are planning to share some excellent practice in marking with all colleagues.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and exciting. It generates great interest and high levels of involvement from pupils. An excellent variety of clubs and visits extends pupils' enjoyment and learning.
- The school actively promotes British values very successfully and develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. They form very positive relationships with each other and with staff.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes strongly support their outstanding achievement. They are extremely keen to learn, work very hard and show high levels of concentration.
- Pupils rightly feel very safe and secure in school. The school has rigorous procedures in place to ensure that it looks after them extremely well.
- Parents are very positive about the education in the school. They particularly value that their children are happy and feel safe there.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all age groups and in a broad variety of subjects. They carried out several observations jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- The inspection team held formal meetings with staff, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 to talk about their views of school, and spoke informally to many others. Inspectors listened to pupils reading in Years 1 and 4.
- Inspectors checked a range of documents, particularly those related to the school’s evaluation of its own work, keeping pupils safe, the management of teaching and information about pupils’ progress.
- The team examined samples of pupils’ work in their books and on display.
- Inspectors took note of the 91 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to several parents.

## Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lesley Else	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is above average in size for a primary school. It has two classes for each age group. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well-below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club for its own pupils. This was included in the inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that colleagues share the excellent practice in marking pupils' work, seen in some classes and subjects, in particular by ensuring that:
  - teachers are more consistent and precise in the advice they give pupils about how to improve their work
  - teachers check that pupils always act on the advice they have been given.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders, including governors, have established a culture in the school that focuses firmly on improving pupils' achievement and personal development. Staff thoroughly check the quality of all aspects of education, particularly teaching, and the impact on pupils. Most parents praise the school and strongly support its work. Everyone works together extremely well to address any issues identified, so that high achievement and excellent behaviour are the norm.
- Other staff with responsibilities play a full part in maintaining high-quality teaching and learning. Subject leaders check regularly on the teaching and achievement in their areas, and lead colleagues in making improvements. Leaders of each age-range help coordinate practice so that staff work together effectively to ensure high standards of teaching and progress. The leaders of early years and of special educational needs ensure high quality education in their areas of responsibility.
- Leaders manage the quality of teaching very well, and teaching is outstanding as a result. Direct observations of lessons and analysis of work in pupils' books, compared with the attainment of each individual, enable leaders to give teachers clear feedback on their performance. They follow this up with extra training or advice, as appropriate, to help teaching improve.
- Formal procedures to manage teachers' performance are extremely effective. Teachers have clear targets that relate to their own professional needs, the progress of pupils and the school's current priorities. Senior leaders rigorously monitor each teacher's progress against targets, and link success appropriately to progression in pay. Extra help and support, when needed, quickly eliminate any weaknesses in individuals' performance.
- Underpinning many of the school's strengths are the excellent systems in place to assess each individual's attainment, and the use of the information obtained to tailor teaching to maximise all pupils' progress. This is particularly valuable in ensuring that the most able are challenged, and that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive appropriate work. This contributes to the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities, ensuring that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make the same excellent progress.
- Leaders spend pupil premium money very wisely. It helps provide extra staff to work with eligible pupils, or extra equipment for them. This has been extremely effective. Disadvantaged pupils attain similarly high standards to their classmates, and make progress that is at least as good. Other funding supplements the pupil premium to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have full access to all aspects of school life.
- The school makes excellent use of the primary school sport and physical education premium. The emphasis is on long-term effectiveness, improving the skills of staff through extra training. Extra equipment purchased and the use of specialist coaches have extended the range of sporting clubs and activities available. Membership of a local organisation has enabled extensive participation in competitive sport. There are plans to upgrade the quality of the playing surface of the school field, a long-standing problem.
- The local authority provides a useful and regular external evaluation of the school's effectiveness, supporting the school's own high-quality self-evaluation. It has rightly identified the school as being high-performing, and directs most of its support through the local cluster of schools, in which Finstall takes a strong role.
- The school's excellent curriculum provides a firm basis for pupils' outstanding achievement and personal development. There is a strong and successful focus on high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. A wide range of exciting and enjoyable activities in other subjects, special events and visits complements the work on English and mathematics. The wide range of sport and exercise available includes dance, swimming, football, golf and bell boating (an activity involving twin-hulled canoes that hold up to 10 children).

- The excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes strongly to pupils' outstanding behaviour. They learn about different religions and cultures, and to value other people's opinions and beliefs. The school enhances this by links with schools in this country with very different intakes, as well as by the flourishing partnership with schools in France. The school is highly successful in its active promotion of British values. The impact is clear in pupils' secure understanding of democracy and the rule of law, supported by their participation in representative bodies in the school, and their close adherence to and support for the school's rules and routines. Discrimination is not tolerated. The school prepares pupils extremely well for life in modern British society.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are very robust. The school gives a high priority to this aspect of its provision, and liaises well with other agencies and with parents to help keep pupils secure. It is quick to respond to any issues, and ensures a high level of training for staff and governors to support this.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is extremely effective. Governors have excellent systems to check on the school's effectiveness, and are fully involved in the process of monitoring how well it is doing. In particular, their very secure understanding of data means they are fully aware of how well pupils are achieving. This means they can challenge staff and hold the school to account for its work, as well as supporting it in its aims. They have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching, through the school's excellent systems that check and improve teachers' performance. They use this information to reward good performance and to tackle any issues robustly.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Right from their start in Reception, pupils are relaxed and happy in school, follow routines very conscientiously, and get along extremely well with each other and with the staff.
- Pupils concentrate very hard in class and are keen to succeed. They listen attentively to their teachers, respond thoughtfully to questions and follow instructions very well. They appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions, and older pupils say these have resulted in much better behaviour.
- Pupils' deep interest in what they are learning strongly supports their progress. They stay on task, whether they are working in a group or independently, and get on conscientiously with their work. They have excellent collaborative skills and share ideas thoughtfully, listening carefully to each other and making decisions together.
- Pupils show great consideration for each other, whether at work or at play. At break times, play is often lively and energetic, but pupils are always careful not to interfere with others' games. In class, they willingly help others who need it, and take a lively interest in each other's work, praising each other for success.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and excellent relationships are illustrated by their cheerful approach to breakfast club, when pupils of different ages play together sensibly, while enjoying a healthy start to the day.
- In discussion, older pupils are very reflective on their own behaviour, and know how it is important for their future lives in school and beyond. Several pupils explained to an inspector how they had worked to improve their own behaviour because they know it will boost their chances of success in school.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils take care to behave safely in school and know they have to contribute to their classmates' safety as well as their own. They have learned how to stay safe, on the internet, for example. Hygiene is continually reinforced at appropriate times during the school day.

- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is in its different forms, and of how it differs from other poor behaviour. They can remember minor incidents from the past, but not any from recently, and say that bullying is very rare. They are very confident that their teachers would quickly deal with any problems.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in the school, and can explain what they and the staff do to maintain this. Most parents are positive about how the school looks after their children.
- Attendance is consistently above average, and pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.

### The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers show exceptional skill in generating enthusiasm and maintaining pupils' interest in lessons. Pupils themselves said this is one of the things they like most about the school, and that they are never bored.
- Teachers establish very clear routines in class and emphasise their high expectations of work and behaviour. Pupils respond to this very positively. They like and respect their teachers and are keen to please them by meeting their expectations.
- Teachers explain things extremely well to pupils, often using the interactive whiteboard to clarify their explanations and, when appropriate, show them just what is wanted. This means that pupils are able to get straight on with their work, because they understand what is wanted, and no time is wasted.
- Teachers make excellent use of the information about pupils' achievement to give them tasks that are challenging but manageable. They give the most-able pupils harder work, and give easier tasks to support those who might otherwise struggle. Teachers build upon this practice by frequently checking on pupils' progress during lessons, quickly intervening to help any who are struggling, and thoughtfully challenging others to refine their work and extend their thinking.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong because teachers insist that pupils think through their ideas and explain their thinking. This gives pupils a deeper insight and a more secure understanding, so that they are able to build on what they already know.
- The teaching of reading gets off to an excellent start in the early years, when teachers give pupils a secure understanding of phonics (how different letter combinations in words represent different sounds). Across the school, teaching develops pupils' skills systematically and helps pupils use their reading skills in a variety of other subjects to boost their learning.
- The teaching of writing has improved in the last year. Teachers dealt successfully with the relative weakness in boys' writing by choosing topics that appealed more to them. In parallel, teachers helped pupils to improve their presentation through the consistent use of a joined handwriting style. This is also having a positive impact on the fluency of pupils' writing and on spelling. Teachers give pupils excellent opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects, which provides very good practice in using a range of styles.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' progress in lessons. They are well briefed to complement the work of the teacher so that the adults work as an effective team. Teachers use these extra adults particularly well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive a balance of support and challenge to help them succeed. Teaching assistants make a particularly strong contribution to the outstanding teaching and learning in the early years.
- All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately. They praise what pupils have done well, which motivates them to work hard. In some books, pupils improve their work considerably in response to excellent practice in marking, when teachers make it very clear how pupils can do better. This practice is not consistent, and in some cases, teachers do not always ensure that pupils act on their advice. Senior leaders are considering how to share the excellent practice with all colleagues.

**The achievement of pupils****is outstanding**

- Boys and girls from different backgrounds all make excellent progress across the school. As a result, overall attainment is very high.
- Children start in early years with skills and understanding that vary considerably between individuals but are broadly typical for their ages. By the end of Reception, they have made outstanding progress, with an above-average proportion reaching a good level of development. In 2014, boys achieved less well in writing but there is no sign of this relative weakness now.
- Excellent progress continues at Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics for several years. By Year 4, the school's records and the work in pupils' books show they are working at a much higher level than is usual for their age. Last year, over half of the Year 4 pupils reached the level expected for pupils in Year 6. Work in books shows that standards this year are similarly high.
- The most-able pupils all achieve extremely well, with all those in the current and previous Year 4 classes making at least the progress expected of them, and many exceeding this. Many pupils in the current Year 4 are producing work that would be typical of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. For example, in mathematics, Year 4 pupils show a deep level of understanding of equivalent fractions and percentages.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same excellent progress as their classmates, and reach higher levels of attainment than would be expected from their individual starting points.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment with others in the school or nationally without potentially identifying them. Their progress through the school is at least as good as that of their classmates, and is sometimes better.
- Pupils have excellent computer skills and use these extremely well to support their learning in other subjects.

**The early years provision****is outstanding**

- Provision in the early years classes shares many of the strengths of the rest of the school. Children make excellent progress from their starting points in all areas of learning and are extremely well prepared to start in Year 1.
- Children do particularly well in phonics because teaching of this aspect of reading is highly effective. Adults teach children in groups that reflect the stage they have reached, so that they learn quickly. The range of exciting activities hold their attention and lead to rapid progress. They use their understanding very well to help them read, and it is exceptionally effective in helping them to write. Consequently, boys' writing, weaker in 2014, matches that of the girls. All the children are already becoming independent writers, with the most able writing legible, well-spelled sentences unaided.
- Teaching is outstanding. Adults are particularly skilled at knowing when to intervene in children's play to extend their learning. Staff challenge children to think about what they are doing and to explain their ideas. This develops their understanding extremely well, extends their vocabulary, and contributes to very good speaking and listening skills.
- The provision of a wide range of interesting, hands-on, practical activities indoors and out engages children's enthusiasm and ensures that they are purposefully involved in learning throughout the day. They are strongly encouraged to cooperate in their play and do so very well, sharing equipment happily and discussing their ideas enthusiastically.
- The leadership of the early years is outstanding. Staff work together very effectively. They use regular and frequent assessments of children's skills and interests to ensure that they have activities that challenge

and engage them. The quick response in 2014, when boys' writing showed it was lagging behind other aspects of their learning, is testament to the high-quality leadership in the early years.

- As in the rest of the school, procedures to keep children safe are strong, and children are looked after very well. They feel extremely happy, safe and secure and greatly enjoy learning. They behave extremely well, following routines conscientiously and responding quickly and sensibly to adults' questions or instructions.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116660
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	461806

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	300
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23–24 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01527 872 938
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