

# Inspection of Finstall First School

Carnforth Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 2HS

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Inspection dates: 3 and 4 June 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Finstall is a welcoming school and has high ambition for its pupils. This high ambition is realised for most pupils. Most pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils, staff, parents and carers are right to be proud of this school.

The school has high expectations for how pupils should behave. Staff share these expectations. Pupils are polite and thoughtful. They demonstrate high levels of concentration during lessons. Playtimes are calm and purposeful. Pupils are happy and safe.

There are a range of inclusive extra-curricular activities for pupils to participate in. These include dance, arts and crafts and football. Older pupils take part in bell boating lessons and compete in a regatta. Some pupils learn to play an instrument, such as the keyboard and clarinet.

The curriculum is enriched through a range of visits and visitors. Pupils learn about map skills in local studies as part of the geography curriculum. A chef has visited school to teach pupils about cookery linked to the design and technology curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 attend an annual residential visit to take part in outdoor activities that build their resilience. Pupils are well prepared for their move to middle school.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. It has been carefully crafted and sets out the knowledge and vocabulary pupils are to learn. Staff are knowledgeable and responsive to the needs of most pupils. Staff make appropriate checks on what pupils know and can do. They make sure that gaps in knowledge are addressed appropriately. As a result, most pupils achieve well across the whole curriculum.

Pupils learn phonics each day as soon as they join the school. Staff have the expertise to teach phonics effectively. The school puts in place extra phonics lessons regularly to help pupils who need additional support. This enables most pupils to catch up successfully. Pupils read books which are well matched to their phonics knowledge. The school encourages pupils to read widely and often. Pupils choose books from the school library and a lunchtime book trolley for a quiet read. Most pupils read regularly at home. Pupils achieve high standards in reading.

Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to practise letter formation and handwriting. However, expectations are inconsistent and lack a coherent structure. This has led to inconsistencies in the way that letter formation and handwriting are taught. Many pupils do not form letters correctly. This develops into widespread inconsistencies in handwriting across the school. The school has noticed this and has begun to revise the curriculum for letter formation and handwriting.

Children are well cared for in the early years. The environment is calm and purposeful. Rules and routines are well established. Children concentrate well for extended periods of

time. As children join the school, staff have noticed that some children need more support with their fine motor development. There are lots of effective strategies in place to support fine motor development, such as cutting with scissors, threading and manipulating dough to music. Staff provide extra support for some children when they find holding a pencil tricky. This is beginning to have a positive impact on how well children achieve in the early years.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) swiftly. The school is developing the expertise of staff to support pupils with SEND. This is increasing the skills of staff to adapt the curriculum for pupils who need this. Some pupils with SEND now get the right help. However, this is not consistent. Some pupils with SEND do not get the help they need to achieve well.

Pupils understand fundamental British values, such as what democracy means. They vote for school councillors and know that this is fair. Pupils can take on a range of leadership roles, such as school councillor and reading ambassador. They learn about active lifestyles and compete in several sports competitions, such as tag rugby. Pupils learn about how to be an active citizen by fundraising for local and national charities, including donating to a local foodbank.

Governors know their roles and responsibilities well. They take these seriously. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school. They use this knowledge to appropriately challenge and support the school. The school supports the well-being and workload of staff effectively. As a result, the staff team is stable and productive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school has not ensured that handwriting and letter formation are taught consistently. This means that many pupils do not form letters correctly. The school should revise its letter formation and handwriting curriculum and implement it consistently so that pupils write accurately and successfully.
- The school has not ensured that some pupils with SEND are supported as well as they could be. As a result, these pupils do not achieve well enough. The school should make sure that staff have the right expertise about pupils' SEND needs and apply this knowledge consistently to support pupils with SEND effectively.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116660
<b>Local authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10343811
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Martin Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Mason
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.finstallfirst.co.uk">www.finstallfirst.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 April 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school runs a before-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the governing body and a representative of Worcestershire Local Authority. They held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and other leaders. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about behaviour, attendance, the school curriculum and improvement planning. The school website was also reviewed.
- Inspectors observed informal times of the day to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Emma Titchener, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Khalid Din	Ofsted Inspector
Vicki Shuter	Ofsted Inspector

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