

# Featherby Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118420
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	358343
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	326
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Ainsley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Chilham Road Gillingham ME8 6BT
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@featherby-jun.medway.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, members of the governing body, staff and different groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 86 questionnaires from parents and carers, 14 from staff and 97 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of teaching at providing the right level of challenge for all pupils, especially in English and science.
- The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of the new leadership team and middle managers on driving improvement.
- Pupils' responsibility-taking and how well they understand how to improve their work.

## Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average junior school that takes most of its pupils from the local community. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. ♦♦

♦ The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School accreditation. It is also part of the 'Get Set Network' in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

This satisfactory school is moving forward at a steady pace under the clear guidance of senior leaders. The school is particularly successful at supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils are happy at school, behave well and are very thoughtful about the needs of others. They keenly take on responsibility and make a good contribution to the community.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Although there is some good teaching, much of it is satisfactory. Teachers are enthusiastic and hard-working but they do not always meet differing pupils' needs well enough. Since the last inspection, the school has developed thorough systems for assessing pupils' progress, but this information is not always used effectively to plan what needs to be taught next in English, mathematics or science. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to be independent and to take the initiative in lessons. Consequently, there are occasions in lessons when pupils are too passive and are not actively engaged in their learning. ❖

Pupils are looked after well and the school gives their safety a high priority.

This is supported effectively by the school's good partnership with outside agencies and with parents and carers. Consequently, pupils feel very safe and are very confident that any problems or worries will be sorted out quickly. They develop a good knowledge of the value of staying healthy, keenly taking part in the very wide number of sporting activities offered by the school. Pupils are rightly proud of 'The Physical Education School of the Year' title that they won in the 2010 Medway Sports awards.

There are satisfactory systems for evaluating school effectiveness, with members of the governing body providing good challenge in this process. A restructured management team is supported well by middle managers. Together, they have made a start to improving attainment, and although they acknowledge that there is still much to do, there have been many helpful new initiatives. For example, over the last two years, good progress has been made in improving the science curriculum so that pupils' skills now develop more systematically and learning is more practical. New systems for tracking pupils' learning are helping leaders to respond more speedily to any dips in their progress. Leaders monitor teaching and learning regularly but they have not taken effective enough action to iron out the remaining inconsistencies. Initiatives such as a recent focus on marking and target setting are not always monitored with sufficient rigour to ensure that they are being applied consistently and are having a sustained effect across the whole school. Nevertheless, school data show that pupils' progress is beginning to pick up and their attainment in mathematics rose in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2010.

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Successes such as these demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sharper use of the monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders at all levels to identify key development points and to set clear actions for improvement in teaching
  - ensuring that senior leaders and middle managers monitor initiatives more closely to check that they are being sustained and are having the desired effect.
- Move satisfactory teaching to good by ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information to pitch work at the right level for all pupils.
- Ensure that pupils are less passive in lessons by giving them more opportunities to be independent, to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in above-average rates of attendance and in their positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in most lessons, building steadily on their broadly average starting points in Year 3. In some lessons, pupils' progress is good. For example, in a good numeracy lesson, pupils worked together enthusiastically as they learnt how to present data in pictograms. Learning moved on quickly because pupils were motivated and they were encouraged to think like mathematicians. In a satisfactory literacy lesson, pupils improved their writing skills steadily as they devised questions to ask a mythical creature. The activity was enjoyable but some pupils were too passive throughout much of the lesson. In contrast, pupils in a good history lesson in Year 6 came alive when they were asked to think for themselves. There was a buzz of excitement as pupils sensibly suggested ways in which place-names could be represented by Aztec carvings. ♦ In some lessons, work is too hard or too easy for some pupils and they are not expected to work quickly. For example, when writing a poem, the teacher did not make expectations for different groups of pupils clear and this meant that skills did not improve quickly enough.

There is well-planned provision outside lessons for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and they make good progress at these times. As with other pupils, progress in lessons, while satisfactory overall, is uneven, and there are occasions when they find work too hard or there is too much reliance on adult help to ensure that they complete a task.

Pupils' social and moral development is strong. Their behaviour is good and they get on well together. They develop a good sense of right and wrong, and the way that they cooperate in lessons is a good feature of otherwise satisfactory preparation for their future economic well-being. Pupils' manners and politeness to visitors are exemplary and they make a good contribution to the school community. They happily organise fundraising activities, with their recent charity rowing event for 'Help for Heroes' a noteworthy example of this.

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◆ The school has Healthy School accreditation and this is reflected in the way that pupils very keenly adopt healthy lifestyles. They thoroughly enjoy the school's sports clubs and physical education lessons and, as part of the 'Get Set Network', are very actively involved in local projects linked to the 2012 Olympics.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Adults take good care of the pupils. There are good links with outside agencies to get extra help for pupils when it is needed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are being provided with increasingly good support, especially in intervention groups outside lessons. There are good transition arrangements for pupils when they start school or move on to their next school.

There are good features to teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage behaviour well and make clear to pupils at the start of lessons what they are expected to learn. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning when working with groups of pupils outside lessons. Teachers assess learning carefully and, where teaching is good, they use this information to plan what to teach next and to ensure that there is a good pace to learning. Such good practice is not evident in all lessons, and this is the main reason why much of the teaching is satisfactory. There is also an occasional lack of pace when teachers talk for too long at the start or end of lessons, without involving the pupils

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sufficiently. The use of marking and target setting has been a recent focus for improvement and pupils are becoming much more aware of how to improve their work, although this is not yet consistently strong in all classes.

The curriculum soundly promotes basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology, but work does not always take account of pupils' interests or the different ways that they learn so that it is consistently relevant and purposeful. This is an important factor in the lack of engagement seen in some lessons.

◆ Clubs, especially in sport, enrich the curriculum and contribute enormously to pupils' enjoyment of school. Good partnerships with other schools have a good effect on learning. For example, gifted and talented pupils are able to attend workshops in other local schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels have a strong determination to improve provision and their drive and ambition are satisfactorily embedded across the school. There is a clear understanding of priorities and a start has been made to tackling them. However, monitoring is not rigorous enough to ensure that improvements have a sustained impact over time. There is regular monitoring of teaching but development points are not always followed up to check that they have had a positive effect on pupils' learning. The governing body provides good challenge. In recent reviews, the governing body has rightly identified that progress is not yet even enough and it is rigorously challenging senior leaders to tackle this issue, setting very clear targets for improvement.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination satisfactorily. Leaders are diligent in dealing with discrimination and over the last two years have begun to make sharper use of data to check the progress of different groups so that any underachievement can be tackled more quickly. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Good engagement with parents and carers means that the school is responsive to local needs, but pupils' understanding of life beyond Britain is less strongly developed and has rightly been identified by leaders as a priority for improvement as links with a school in Malawi have proved to be unsustainable.

◆ The school has good safeguarding procedures. There are a comprehensive range of policies and effective staff training on child protection to underpin the good safe practice in school. The school is diligent in ensuring that pupils and adults are able to work in a safe and secure environment.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Nearly all parents and carers who returned the Ofsted questionnaire are pleased with the work of the school. Positive comments included, 'I am pleased with the way the school helps my child when needed and how staff support healthy lifestyles' and 'My child is very settled and happy at school.' A small number of parents and carers are concerned about how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour and whether it does enough to take account of their views and suggestions. During this inspection, the inspection team saw no unacceptable behaviour and found that the school has good systems for tackling it on those occasions when it does occur. The school has suitable systems to consult with parents and carers, with many saying that they found staff open and approachable.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Featherby Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 326 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	52	39	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	43	46	53	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	36	48	56	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	49	35	41	7	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	51	38	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	42	42	49	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	42	45	52	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	37	43	50	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	41	43	50	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	41	35	41	8	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	29	47	55	9	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	49	37	43	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	56	32	37	4	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Featherby Junior School, Gillingham ME8 6BT**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for completing the questionnaire. You were very polite and friendly and we enjoyed looking at your work. At the moment, your school provides a satisfactory education. This means that we found some good things in the school but also some things that need improving.

These are some of the things we found out about your school.

- Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress as you move through the school.
- Your behaviour is good and you get on well together. We are particularly impressed by your knowledge of how to stay healthy and you are lucky to be able to take part in so many sporting activities.
- All adults in school are kind and caring, and they give you suitable help when you find work difficult.
- You happily take responsibility for many things. The school council does a great job in helping you to contribute to school life.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs improving and are taking the right steps to move things forward more quickly.

This is what we have asked your school to do now.

- Make sure that leaders are checking that all the things they are doing to help you do better are having the desired effect and are helping to improve teaching and your learning in lessons.
- Make sure that work is pitched at the right level for all of you so that you learn quickly all of the time.
- Make sure that you have more opportunities in lessons to think for yourself and take responsibility for your own learning.

We wish you all well for the future. We hope all of you will help your teachers by working hard and trying to take a more active part in lessons.

Yours faithfully

Mike Capper Lead inspector

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