

Felmore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133573
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	360533
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	436
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Val Willcox
Headteacher	Liz Mulcahy (Advisory)
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2008
School address	Davenants Pitsea, Basildon SS13 1QX
Telephone number	01268 729885
Fax number	01268 724104
Email address	head@felmore-pri.essex.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Inspection number	360533

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 19 lessons. They also visited small out-of-class teaching groups and observed 18 teachers in all. The inspection team met parents and carers informally and held meetings with the advisory headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation and procedures. They took account of questionnaire responses from 56 parents and carers, 52 staff and 65 pupils.

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

Do teachers use assessment information well to identify underachievement and match work to pupils' ability?

- Are there effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment for pupils?
- Is the curriculum adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and provide stimulating learning experiences?
- How rigorous and effective are leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring the work of the school and making sharp judgements about the school's performance?

Information about the school

Felmore is a much larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than that found nationally. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. Over one third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is a much larger proportion than average as is that of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is larger than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage has three Reception classes. The school has the Activemark award and holds Healthy School status.

A number of changes have been made to the leadership of the school this academic year while the substantive headteacher has been absent due to ill health. The deputy headteacher was supported by the local authority during the autumn term 2010. School leaders and managers as well as the governing body are receiving support from the local authority. An advisory headteacher was appointed in January 2011 to provide additional support to the school.

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?**4****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is, therefore, given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress that pupils make and their attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Pupils are happy, behave well and enjoy their learning at Felmore. However, lessons are not challenging and teachers do not set consistently high expectations, especially for the more-able pupils. As a result, pupils make too little progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and fall behind other pupils nationally. This was especially so in 2010 for pupils in Year 6 whose attainment was exceptionally low. Attainment for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who accounted for almost two thirds of the Year 6 group, was also inadequate because they received very limited support and the next steps in their learning were not systematically planned.

There is a legacy of underachievement in the school but this is now being addressed with growing signs of success. As a result of strong, well-planned support from the local authority together with incisive leadership by the advisory headteacher, pupils in Years 3, 4 and 6 are now making satisfactory progress. However, pupils in Year 5 and in Key Stage 1 still make too little progress. The introduction of a structured programme of support for pupils who find learning difficult has been introduced and is underpinned by training for support staff. As a result the progress made by this group of pupils is also improving gradually. Teaching is now satisfactory following the careful monitoring and support provided by consultant teachers and the advisory headteacher. Pupils' progress is now tracked carefully through the school, underachievement is identified quickly and appropriate support provided for pupils in classes and in small inclusion groups. Assessment information is not used consistently by teachers so lesson plans do not always provide appropriate challenge for all groups of pupils, especially those of higher ability. Although pupils work is generally marked carefully, it does not routinely make clear to pupils how they can improve their work or identify the next steps in their learning. The quality of marking is variable across the school and between subjects.

Senior leaders and the governing body were diverted from focusing on development points from the previous inspection report during a period of staffing disruptions. Satisfactory steps have now been taken to address these development points and secure measures are in place to improve achievement for all pupils. The impetus to raise attainment has been accelerated by the appointment of the advisory headteacher. She has gained the confidence of staff in the drive to improve the school. Senior leaders and managers are embracing their new, clearly-defined roles and responsibilities with

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

enthusiasm. Subject leaders are not yet sharing with the advisory headteacher in the monitoring of lessons, to help improve teaching and learning more rapidly. The governing body have undertaken training to improve their skills in holding the school to account and undertake their monitoring role with greater efficiency. In view of some visible improvements in both provision and outcomes for pupils the school has a satisfactory capacity for self-evaluation and to improve.

Pupils' personal development is promoted soundly and they have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Staff know pupils well and there is a strong focus on pastoral care. However, the quality of care, guidance and support are no better than satisfactory because they do not yet contribute greatly to significant improvement in pupils' achievement during their time in Felmore. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences but links between curriculum subjects are limited. Those links that are in place, although making learning more interesting, are not used effectively to provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in literacy and numeracy throughout the school by:
 - using assessment information to consistently plan lessons which offer high challenge to pupils of all abilities, especially for those who are more able
 - ensuring that marking identifies clearly for pupils how they can improve a piece of work and make better progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching to good or better throughout the school by regular and rigorous monitoring of lessons by all senior leaders and managers.
- Develop links between curriculum subjects to provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, they are keen to join in discussions, work well in pairs and groups and settle quickly to their individual tasks. One pupil said of his school 'It's lovely here. I think it's a good place to learn and I want to learn.' This positive will to learn has been lost recently and pupils have made inadequate progress because teaching has not challenged them and their learning has fallen behind. Pupils enter Year 1 with below-average skills and make inadequate progress, especially in writing. In Key Stage 2 attainment has fluctuated but fell significantly in 2010. The school is now focusing on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills rapidly. For example, in a Year 5 class pupils were practising using speech marks and accurate punctuation as well as trying to find interesting words to improve their work. They enjoyed their tasks and most made satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, because the lesson was interesting and they were well supported. However, the tasks planned for pupils of higher ability did not challenge them fully and so progress for this group was limited despite their enjoyment of the lesson.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and their good moral code is reflected in their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils enjoy a wide range of

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

responsibilities in school but they have only limited involvement in their local area. Pupils are helped to develop a good awareness of how to stay safe and what they need to do to have a healthy lifestyle. Attendance, which is rigorously monitored, is now average. It is only affected by the poor attendance of a very few families who do not give a high priority to prompt and regular attendance. The Activemark and healthy school status indicate the importance placed on this aspect of pupils' development. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory but their inadequate achievement means they are not adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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?

Teaching is improving. Lessons have a clear structure and learning objectives are set. Rapid improvement has been made in integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into lessons to make learning more fun. Pupils enjoy opportunities to carry out research using ICT, as in a Year 3 geography lesson on sea creatures and their habitats. This lesson also enabled pupils to develop their literacy skills by recording their findings. Support for pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory and improving. This is the result of introducing a structured learning support programme as well as the provision of training for learning support staff. Support for individual pupils or small groups out of class is now

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

carefully organised. Staff make good use is made of a range of attractive, small learning bases that have been created around the school.

The curriculum provides a balanced range of learning experiences which are extended by a limited but sound range of visits, visitors and school clubs. Linking areas of the curriculum is an aspect that is not developed effectively in many classes. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are confident with staff, know they can talk about their problems and seek help when they need it. The care provided by school staff extends suitably to the before- and after- school clubs that are well attended by pupils. Links with pre-school groups and local secondary schools are used appropriately to ensure a smooth transition between different stages of pupils' education. The links established with an appropriate range of agencies and services extends the satisfactory care provided for pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The intensive support of the local authority from the beginning of the academic year and the energetic and perceptive leadership of the advisory headteacher has been warmly welcomed by staff and the governing body. Rapid implementation of well-chosen strategies following a careful analysis of the school's areas of weakness is showing clear, if early, signs of success. Increasingly, subject leaders are taking charge of the development of their subject areas and share with teaching staff a united enthusiasm to improve the school and raise achievement for all pupils. All staff and the governing body recognise that they have capacity to improve further. They are keen to move forward and are not complacent. Strategies to improve achievement for pupils are becoming embedded and showing signs of success as progress is improving in some year groups. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been reviewed, is better planned and has led to improvements in pupils' progress, although work is at an early stage. Equality of opportunity is inadequate because groups of pupils still do not achieve as well as they should.

Safeguarding arrangements in the school are good. Policies and procedures are well integrated through the school and staff receive regular training. Community cohesion is satisfactory. There is a clear plan to help pupils appreciate their future role as citizens but work to extend this area is evolving only slowly. Partnerships with local schools are used productively including joint training for staff. Links with parents and carers are satisfactory and regular progress reports, consultation meetings, forums and newsletters keep families soundly informed about their child's progress and developments in the school.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly in school because they have good resources and enjoy their activities. Children enter Reception with a range of skills and abilities but they are well below expectations for their age especially in elements of language, numeracy and creative development. Children make good progress but their skills remain below expectations in writing and knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a focus on improving children's writing skills by developing their understanding of words and learning to blend the letter sounds. Resources are used appropriately by staff to plan activities that cover the six areas of learning. Learning activities led by teachers are good and develop children's skills well. However, staff do not always guide children to develop new skills and explore the world around them. There are also missed opportunities for encouraging children to explain their ideas when they are playing. Children mix well and learn to share. As a result, they follow routines and learn to tidy things away sensibly. They also develop good independent skills, for example, at snack time children take turns to select fruit from the range available and take it, with their plate, to the snack table to eat. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children's development is carefully monitored by all staff and the learning journey records are shared regularly with parents and carers who can add their own comments to the record. Links with two local pre-school groups ensure a smooth transition to Reception. Staff work as a satisfactory team to plan weekly activities for the children. Teachers' plans are amended to reflect the different needs of the three Reception classes and to respond appropriately to the observations of children's development.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A few parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Most of these parents and carers, and those who spoke to inspectors, are pleased with many aspects of the school. They value the fact that their children like school, are safe and helped to have a healthy lifestyle. They are also happy with their children's experience of school and feel they are well informed about their children's progress. A few parents and carers have reservations about pupils' behaviour. The inspection found behaviour to be good in lessons and around the school. Some parents and carers expressed concerns about the way in which the school was led and managed. They are very aware of the difficulties for the school arising from staff absences and changes in leadership and management at senior level. The inspection found evidence to support the early signs of positive improvement in the school following this difficult period.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Felmore Primary 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 436 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	66	19	34	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	34	61	21	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	36	35	63	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	29	36	64	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	22	39	31	55	1	2	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	32	34	61	0	0	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	32	37	66	0	0	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)	13	23	34	61	2	4	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	32	34	61	2	4	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	21	34	61	8	14	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	18	39	70	2	4	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	10	18	38	68	4	7	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	36	34	61	1	2	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Felmore Primary School Basildon SS13 1QX

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We were interested to see your school, the extensive grounds with the 'bubbles' used as a greenhouse for the gardening club and a playtime base for pupils who do not want to use the playground. We worked very closely with your advisory headteacher and also spent some time talking to your teachers and the governing body. As a result of the inspection we have judged that, although there are some good things about your school, there is much that needs to be improved.

You told us how much you like your school. You behave well and have a good understanding of what you need to do to be healthy and how to keep safe. However, you do not all make as much progress in your learning as you should so we have given your school a notice to improve. This means that inspectors will visit again to check that your school is improving. We have talked about this with your advisory headteacher and the governing body and we have asked that they do the following things to make your school better.

So that you make better progress and your achievement is improved, we have asked that your teachers use what they know about the progress you are making and plan activities to challenge you to do the best you can, especially those of you who find learning easy.

When they mark your work, we have asked that teachers always make it clear to you, how you can improve it and what you have to learn next.

To make your lessons even better, we have asked the senior staff to visit lessons more often and identify with your teachers how they can improve your learning.

Finally, we have asked that you have more chances to improve your literacy and numeracy skills in interesting ways in other subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.