

# Feering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115106
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	367405
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sally Myers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Pomeroy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Coggeshall Road Feering, Colchester CO5 9QB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited sixteen lessons taught by six teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 83 pupils, 22 staff and from 97 parents and carers.

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

- What have been the barriers to improvement at this school?
- Why has attainment in mathematics lagged behind that in English?
- How well is the school meeting the needs of pupils of differing capabilities, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Most pupils are White British, with very small numbers coming from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language but none is at an early stage of learning the language. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The headteacher was appointed in January 2009 after a period in which the school had a temporary headteacher. There have also been many changes of teaching and other staff since the last inspection. Feering has an ActiveMark award and Healthy Schools status.

**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

Feering Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. In its prospectus, the school describes its vision, 'to enable and inspire each child to think and feel positively about themselves and others, and to grow with an enthusiastic understanding of life and learning'. The school already goes a long way to meeting these aims. Because they benefit from good care, guidance and support, pupils are confident youngsters who behave well and get on well together. Despite their good personal development and above-average attendance, pupils' progress is only satisfactory, representing satisfactory achievement in relation to their starting points.

In most years, standards have been average in Key Stage 1. They were below average around the time of the last inspection. Standards in Key Stage 2 dipped sharply in the national tests in 2008. They have remained average in both English and mathematics since then reflecting the satisfactory progress made by most pupils. More-able pupils, however, have done less well than they should. That continues to be so because they are not challenged enough in lessons. Variation in the quality of teaching is reflected in pupils' variable rates of progress as they move through the school. There is similar variation in the quality of marking. Leaders also identify concerns over the reliability of some teacher assessments.

The headteacher and leadership team have an accurate overview of the school, although the monitoring of lessons has sometimes given an overly positive picture of the effectiveness of teaching because it has not always focused sharply enough on the progress pupils make. Although there have been initiatives aimed at raising attainment, their impact has been constrained by an initial degree of complacency among staff following the last inspection report. This is improving, with, for example, changes this year in the Early Years Foundation Stage resulting in good progress when, previously, children's progress in the Reception Year was uneven. Other improvements, for example to overhaul the curriculum and raise the quality of assessment, are still work in progress, with changes too recent to show through in terms of impact in raising attainment. They, nonetheless, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- By the end of the spring term 2012, raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics by eliminating variability in the quality of teaching, and, in particular, ensuring that:

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- the work in lessons is always matched to pupils' different capabilities, particularly to extend the more able
- lengthy periods of passive listening are not allowed to limit the opportunities for pupils to get on with writing and practical activities
- pupils all take pride in the presentation of their work
- teachers direct questions rather than always taking answers from volunteers
- teaching assistants are given an active role during whole-class teaching
- leaders' lesson observations focus on the progress made by all groups of pupils.
- By the start of the spring term 2012, improve assessment and the impact of marking by:
  - working together within the school, and with staff in neighbouring schools, to ensure that teachers' assessments in each year group are accurate and reliable
  - giving all pupils clear guidance through marking in all subjects that shows them what they need to do to improve their work
  - ensuring that pupils have time to read and respond to the comments teachers make in their marking
  - giving pupils throughout the school the opportunity to routinely check and mark their own and each other's work
  - making full use of assessment information to plan and deliver work that is appropriately matched to pupils' different capabilities.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Although standards are average overall, attainment is a little higher in English than in mathematics. This is because more of the marking in English gives pupils guidance on how to improve. It is also because fewer opportunities are found for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum. In a Key Stage 2 geography lesson on map-making, for example, the opportunity was missed for even the most able pupils to measure and calculate to scale. Although pupils from all backgrounds, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make satisfactory progress, fewer pupils than might be expected attain the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 tests. This is because more-able pupils are not challenged enough in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make similar progress to their peers. Some of those with severe learning difficulties make relatively good progress because they benefit from well-tailored support. Pupils' attainment in their key skills prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Pupils treat each other with respect, and they have a pride in their school. They generally produce neat work in the 'learning logs' that they complete as homework assignments. Not all, however, take a similar pride in the presentation of their classwork. Sometimes pupils make avoidable errors because their work is untidy, for example when rows of figures are lined up incorrectly in mathematics. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and that they are confident there is an adult they could go to if they had any problems or concerns. They appreciate the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, and pupils practise what they preach: many take part in the various after-school sports opportunities on offer to

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them. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, including as play leaders and 'buddies', whereby older pupils befriend and look after younger ones. This contributes strongly to the school's friendly, family ethos. Pupils enjoy learning about different cultures and ways of life, and they join in with local community activities, including through the school choir. They support a wide range of local, national and international charities.

*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>2</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?

Pupils enjoy lessons because most find their teachers and other staff friendly and approachable. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology, including the interactive whiteboards in each class, to engage pupils' interest. However, they sometimes talk for too long or expect pupils to sit too long listening on the carpet. When this occurs, some pupils' attention wanders. It also reduces the time available for practical activities and writing, contributing to sometimes overly hurried, and consequently scruffy, written work. Questioning is often used well to draw out thoughtful responses from pupils, but teachers mostly take answers from those who put up their hands to volunteer. This can mean other pupils contributing little in lessons and being less involved. Teaching assistants generally give well-focused support to pupils during individual or group work, but they are often passive observers during whole-class teaching. The opportunity is missed, on these occasions, for example, to use the time to record pupils'

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contributions for the teacher and make a note of those pupils who are slow to volunteer answers.

Marking gives pupils too few pointers on what they need to do to improve. Even where advice to pupils is recorded, it is not always evident that pupils have read, understood and acted upon it. There are examples within the school of pupils checking and assessing their own and each other's work, but these are sporadic. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to plan and deliver work that is appropriately matched to pupils' different capabilities. Too often, pupils of widely different abilities are given essentially the same work to do. This is particularly the case where teachers rely on worksheets aimed at the class average. These provide insufficient support to guide the learning of lower attaining pupils, while limiting opportunities for more-able pupils to write at length or to present information in their own way.

Plans this year to improve the curriculum are well underway. Pupils have had the opportunity to contribute to curriculum changes as members of the Feering Imagination Agency, and the school has drawn well on partnerships with other local schools and outside agencies, for example to develop sports opportunities. Teachers are increasingly making constructive links between different subjects, although these contribute more to developing literacy skills than those in numeracy. As parents and carers recognise, the arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are a key strength of the school. Carefully tailored support has enabled disabled pupils, for example, to overcome barriers to learning and to participate fully in every aspect of school life, including the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

*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?

Implementing staff changes and managing these have slowed the pace of improvement at the school. Several of those with leadership responsibilities are new to their roles and so have had little time to have an impact on monitoring provision and raising attainment. Leaders have not taken the opportunity to build on the close ties with other local schools to collaborate with them to cross-check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of the levels pupils are working at in each year group. The governing body is very supportive. Its members are committed to the school but they have not been as rigorous as they could be in challenging the school over standards and rates of progress. They have only recently undertaken training to equip them to interpret performance data. The school development plan focuses on appropriate priorities but the governing body has not set measurable criteria against which it can gauge the school's success. The governing body ensures,

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however, that all safeguarding requirements are fully met. The school goes beyond these requirements by involving the pupils in considering safety issues. Pupils are vigilant, for example, about internet safety.

In many respects, equal opportunities are promoted well. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls, and even pupils describe the school as 'inclusive' because of the way it accommodates the needs of pupils in wheelchairs. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory rather than better, however, because more-able pupils continue to do less well than they should. Provision for community cohesion is good because the school is harmonious and pupils learn to respect their own and others' cultural heritages. Although the school is currently seeking another in the United Kingdom in different social circumstances with which to twin, it succeeds in broadening pupils' awareness of global diversity. Links with the local community are very strong. Key resources, including the hall and playing fields, are shared within the community. This helps to make the school an important community hub while allowing pupils to benefit from more generous facilities than might otherwise be available to a school of this size.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Reception children learn in a safe and stimulating environment, with good opportunities for outdoor learning. A strong emphasis on blends of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) has resulted in the large majority of children working confidently, having made good progress in constructing sentences and in developing early writing skills. Children join the Reception Year with pre-school skills that are in line with age-related expectations but, by the end of the year, are working above the national average. Progress in previous years has not been as good.



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Leaders ensure that Early Years Foundation Stage provision is inclusive; resources are used well to assist those pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, including those who speak English as an additional language. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress in line with their peers. Children's welfare is promoted well and early independence fostered. All children have 'learning journey' books that are shared with parents and carers and which illustrate their experiences and personal development. Often, photographic evidence is used, and these annotated pictures of the children doing new and exciting things help to describe their responses and confirm their individual progress.

The children benefit greatly from a range of activities, including improvised role play, varied crafts and painting. They quickly learn to count and order numbers, very often in the context of singing, sorting activities, physical counting or by visual observation of the interactive whiteboard. They are aware of how to stay healthy and their physical development is good. On one afternoon each week, they go on environmental walks which encourage them to question and develop confidence in understanding the natural and physical world about them

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Around 60% of the parents and carers returned questionnaires. This is an above average response rate. Parents and carers expressed mixed views. Although the great majority are positive about most aspects of school, some voiced concerns. Several are unhappy with leadership and management of the school because they have worries about the number of different teachers some classes have had. Other parents and carers perceive the school now to be more settled. As one wrote, 'Feering seems back on track'. Another praised the headteacher for having, 'made this school a welcoming, friendly and safe place to be'. All parents and carers who responded have confidence that the school keeps their child safe.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Feering Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	62	33	34	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	55	44	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	39	44	45	12	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	38	49	51	8	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	56	39	40	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	49	41	42	7	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	39	56	58	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)	31	32	49	51	5	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	40	47	48	10	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	36	48	49	9	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	34	46	47	13	13	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	40	37	38	14	14	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	53	40	41	6	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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](http://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"><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.**



27 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Feering Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Colchester, CO5 9QB**

Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school. Feering is giving you a satisfactory education. You are making satisfactory progress and reaching average standards in English and mathematics. The children in the Reception Year are now getting off to a good start, which is an improvement on recent years. There have been other changes too in the school, including those to make the curriculum more interesting and relevant. You have played an important part in this through the Feering Imagination Agency but the curriculum and other changes are too recent to have shown an impact in raising standards.

We would like to see you do better, especially those of you who find learning easy. We have therefore, suggested some ways in which teachers can help you to make faster progress in lessons and we have asked them to improve marking and assessment arrangements. You can help to do better, too, by taking care always to read the comments your teachers make when they mark your work and by doing your best to follow their advice. You can also help to do better by taking as much care as you can to present your work neatly. Some of you sometimes make mistakes, for example in adding up figures in mathematics, because of untidy presentation. That can obviously lose you marks in examinations. It would be good if your classwork was always as neat and clear as the work you do at home in your learning logs.

We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and that you all get on together. It is also good to see so many of you attending regularly. You know a lot about how to keep safe and healthy. You told us you feel safe at school and that is because staff take good care of you. You also look out for each other, and treat each other with kindness. This all helps to make your school such a happy place to be.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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