

Feckenham CofE First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116842
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	358042
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Fiona Arnison

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Leake
Headteacher	Jeannette Little (acting)
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
School address	School Lane Feckenham, Redditch B96 6QD
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed five members of the teaching staff. They held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff and pupils, and spoke to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at various documents, including: a range of self-evaluation documentation; the school's development plan; minutes of governing body meetings; pupils' books; records of pupils' progress and reports on progress to parents and carers. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 65 parents and carers, and also took account of those returned by pupils and staff.

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

- The standards reached and progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Whether or not the quality of teaching is good enough to secure consistently good progress in all subjects, especially in writing.
- How effectively the school's middle leaders monitor standards in their subjects.
- The effectiveness of improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage, and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in their Reception Year and attend the Reception class. The school works in partnership with Birmingham City University to provide placements for trainee teachers. A Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) and a bronze Eco-schools award have recently been achieved by the school.

An acting headteacher has been leading the school since September 2010 while the governing body works to secure a permanent appointment.

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 is a caring village school that looks after its pupils well and provides a satisfactory quality of education. The strong partnership that the school has with its parents and carers is reflected in the recently achieved Leading Parent Partnership Award. Relationships are highly positive and productive. One parent, summing up the views of many, said, 'Both of our children have been very happy here, and I would recommend it to anyone.' Parents and carers know that the school keeps their children safe and encourages them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Provision for pupils' well-being is a strength. For example, inspectors observed a high-quality assembly which encouraged pupils to reflect on the choices that they make, and how these may affect others. The pupils themselves are welcoming, behave well and are keen to learn. Attendance is above average, and has improved recently as a result of measures taken by the school's leaders to reduce family holidays taken in term-time.

Children enter the Reception class with skills typically above those usually expected for their age and experience. They get off to a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and outcomes at the end of the year far exceed those expected. Children are very well prepared for the start of Year 1. They make satisfactory progress in reading and mathematics throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and maintain their well-above average skills. However, progress in writing is more variable. This is due to inconsistencies in the way it is taught and limited opportunity for pupils to write at length.

Pupils' high attainment at the end of Year 4 is due to their good behaviour, positive attitudes and great motivation to learn. Their progress is satisfactory, though, because the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the inspection, some good teaching was observed and no lessons were inadequate. In the best lessons the pace of learning is rapid. Exciting, carefully planned tasks motivate pupils of all abilities to achieve their best. However, this is not always the case. In a few lessons, planning is not sharp enough, and the activities that pupils are asked to complete are not sufficiently focused on furthering their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The school has been without a substantive headteacher for the past year and, despite the governing body's efforts, it has not yet been possible to appoint a replacement. The acting headteacher has identified the school's main strengths and weaknesses; as a result, self-evaluation is now accurate and astute. There have been improvements since the last inspection, for example to the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in the curriculum provision with the introduction of the Forest Schools programme. However, the pace of change is not always fast enough and other key areas previously identified, such as improving the accurate use of assessment and the effectiveness of middle leaders, remain a priority for improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is currently satisfactory.

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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?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in writing, so that all pupils make consistently good or better progress by:
 - making rigorous use of tracking data to identify the progress made by different groups of pupils and implement appropriate intervention strategies
 - developing the role and effectiveness of the leadership team and middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating school improvements
 - ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to write at length about subjects that interest them
 - ensuring that guided writing is taught consistently well.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - carefully planning activities to match clearly identified learning intentions in all lessons
 - ensuring that teachers' explanations and instructions are very clear but suitably brief, so that learning proceeds at a swift pace
 - making more effective use of assessment and success criteria to provide suitable work that challenges all pupils to achieve their best in all lessons
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides pupils with clear guidance about how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning and progress are satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, carefully planned tasks challenge pupils of all abilities and, as a result, they make good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson, Year 4 pupils were challenged to work out how long it would take to unload differing numbers of stone blocks to construct the Egyptian pyramids. All pupils made good use of a range of appropriate mental mathematics skills, including estimating, halving and doubling numbers, and arrived rapidly at a realistic solution to the problem. However, such good progress is not consistent in all lessons and across all subjects. Pupils' progress in writing, for example, is limited by shortcomings in the techniques some teachers use to teach writing to groups. Teachers do not always take account of assessment information or devise clear success criteria to provide work that is well-matched to individuals' needs, and to let them know whether they have met the lesson's aims. Pupils' attainment is monitored accurately. However, this information is not analysed precisely enough to determine variations in progress between individuals and groups and to make changes to practice.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Some make good or outstanding progress, but this is not consistently the case due to the weaknesses identified in teaching and assessment. Teaching assistants and teachers provide diligent, caring support, especially for those pupils with statements of special

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educational needs; however, the academic targets set for these pupils lack a little precision and clarity.

Other outcomes for pupils are good, and reflect the inclusive ethos of the school. Pupils care about each others' well-being; for example, members of the school council were anxious to point out to inspectors their recent work informing all pupils and their parents and carers about the benefits of eating only healthy snacks in school. Pupils are keen to recycle waste, and actively save energy, for instance by turning off unnecessary lights. This positive attitude has helped the school achieve the Eco-school bronze award and has effectively promoted pupils' personal development. Given pupils' well-developed academic skills, their above average attendance and the way in which they work collaboratively together, they are well 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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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?

Pupils enjoy learning, especially when tasks capture their imagination. For example, pupils in Year 3 have very much enjoyed learning about outer space from exciting practical activities. As part of their Forest Schools work, the pupils made rockets from recycled materials. Working together, they designed and constructed suitable launch sites from which they fired their rockets safely into the sky. Their teacher and the Forest Schools leader worked well in partnership to challenge the pupils to consider how they might make their rockets and launchers even more effective. Positive, supportive relationships between

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pupils and adults in all areas of the school further motivate pupils to learn. In weaker lessons, however, the tasks set for pupils are not always clearly explained, and as a result, pupils are unsure about what they have been asked to do. Additionally, pupils have limited opportunities to write at length about subjects that interest and excite them. In some classes, marking is conscientious and thorough, providing pupils with clear feedback about how to make their work better. In other classes, marking is too perfunctory.

The curriculum is well organised to provide a range of memorable learning experiences for the pupils, including those who prefer to learn in a practical way. Educational visits and visitors to school are frequent and stimulate learning. For example, during the inspection, Year 4 pupils and their teacher went on a residential visit which gave them the opportunity to experience exciting outdoor and adventurous activities. This supported both pupils' learning and their personal development. Good use is made of the local area and the outdoors to enhance and extend learning. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs is available, and take-up is high.

Pupils know that the adults take good care of them and are happy to turn to them if they have concerns. Adults take careful account of potentially vulnerable pupils and are quick to provide suitable support if needed. Partnership work with outside agencies to support these pupils' diverse needs is thorough and tenacious. The school's efforts to reduce absence levels have worked well and parents and carers are fully aware of the importance of maintaining pupils' high levels of attendance. Pupils say that they are well supported during their final year at Feckenham to prepare confidently for the transfer to middle school.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has worked to galvanise staff enthusiasm; as a result, morale is high and everyone on the team who responded to the inspection survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff at Feckenham. However, the implementation of some improvements lacks pace and urgency. For example, in the last inspection, the school was asked to provide teachers with opportunities to monitor standards and achievement in the subjects for which they are responsible. Although suitable training for this role has been completed, and some limited monitoring has taken place, there has not been enough emphasis on using the information to strengthen the quality of teaching and, therefore, improve pupils' outcomes. The school has a wealth of assessment data, but its subsequent analysis is not sharp enough to enable leaders at all levels to identify precisely when and where progress slows so they can take timely and appropriate action. Equality of

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opportunity is satisfactory, given that all groups of pupils make broadly satisfactory progress over time.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is well informed about the school, and statutory requirements are met. However, procedures to promote, monitor and evaluate improvements, for example through the school development plan, are not focused sufficiently on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Although attainment is high, the governing body is not holding the school to account for pupils' satisfactory progress. Health and safety checks and risk assessments are thorough. The governing body and the school's leaders have a robust and realistic approach to safety and security, and work continuously to further improve it. Safeguarding procedures are rigorously enforced and monitored, and staff training is exemplary.

The school has forged helpful links with schools both in this country and abroad in order to widen pupils' horizons and promote community cohesion. The close relationship with a school in Kenya enables pupils to understand and speak compassionately about the similarities and differences between the two schools and pupils' lives. Similarly, pupils involved in the link with a contrasting urban school in Worcester were able to reflect on the environmental and cultural differences between the two schools. This contributes very well to pupils' personal development and the inclusive, non-discriminatory ethos of Feckenham. Local community cohesion is a particular strength, given the close-knit nature of the local village community.

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are above expectations for their age. They make good progress in all areas because activities are carefully planned to support each individual's learning. Warm, positive relationships between adults and children

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encourage outstanding personal and social development. Children end their Reception Year with skills that are high when compared to expectations for their age.

Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. A safe and purposeful outdoor area has now been constructed, which can also be accessed by children in Year 1. The well-qualified and knowledgeable Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners have a good understanding of the framework to teach young children and provide every opportunity for them to learn from an exciting range of enjoyable activities. For example, both the children and adults thoroughly enjoy their 'wake and shake' dance session first thing in the morning. Following this, the children are ready to learn, and settle on the carpet to work, for example, to consider which of a number of shoes would provide the best house for a mouse. On this occasion, they tested their ideas independently by filling the shoes with toy mice, and recorded their results successfully. Skilful questioning by the teacher enabled children of all abilities to articulate what they had discovered and to develop their skills and understanding.

During the inspection, the new September 2011 intake of children visited the setting to familiarise themselves with the school, the adults and each other. New and existing parents and carers spoken to were united in their praise of the school's induction arrangements, and spoke very positively about the approachability of staff and the care that their children receive.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The main focus on improving children's outcomes, by developing the provision, has worked well. Leaders are fully aware that recent improvements need to be embedded and monitored further, and plan to introduce a robust system to evaluate the developments so far introduced and to set further priorities for improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned questionnaires was about twice the national average, reflecting their high level of engagement with the school. Many parents and carers wrote comments about how their children are happy at school, and how much everyone feels part of the school 'family'. Those spoken to were also extremely positive about their children's experiences, how their views were considered and about the many opportunities for them to be involved with the school. A very few parents and carers expressed concern about the length of time it is taking to appoint a substantive headteacher. Inspection findings show that every effort is being made to appoint the right

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person, but nevertheless, this concern was conveyed to the Chair of the Governing Body. A very small minority of parents and carers, although generally pleased with other aspects of the school's work, commented that their children were not consistently challenged to make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Feckenham CofE First 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	80	11	17	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	72	18	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	32	35	54	7	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	42	31	48	5	8	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	29	45	32	49	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	49	25	38	5	8	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	55	29	45	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)	26	40	33	51	5	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	49	24	37	7	11	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	29	41	63	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	37	38	58	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	55	24	37	4	6	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	52	24	37	6	9	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).

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.



24 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Feckenham CofE First School, Redditch, B96 6QD

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who filled in the questionnaire. We enjoyed meeting you all and hearing about your lessons and activities. We particularly enjoyed your beautiful singing during assembly.

Feckenham looks after you well and provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. You told us how you all get on well together in lessons and on the playground. You told us that behaviour is usually good in your school. We agree with your views. We were very interested to hear about the school council and Eco-warriors' work, which are clearly helping you to become responsible citizens. We were also interested to hear all about Year 4's residential trip, which we hope that you all enjoyed.

We have asked your teachers to make some improvements to your school so that you make better progress during your time at Feckenham. We would like them to:

- make some changes to the way writing is taught, and give you more opportunities to write longer pieces of work. We have asked the school's leaders to check up on this carefully
- make sure that all of the activities you are asked to do are clearly explained to you and meet your differing needs, so that no-one finds them too easy or too difficult
- make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to make your work even better, and how to go about doing it.

You can all help by listening carefully so that you understand exactly what you have to do, and by using your teachers' advice in new pieces of work.

With very best wishes to all of you at Feckenham C of E First School

Yours sincerely

Fiona Arnison
Lead inspector

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