

# Featherstone Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103318
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376874
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jane Melbourne HMI

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia Macfarlane
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Edris Gaibee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Glenville Drive Birmingham B23 6PR
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 3732529
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 377 6347
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@feathstn.bham.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors who observed 20 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's and pupils' work and looked at documentation relating to teaching and the curriculum, the progress and achievement of pupils, the Early Years Foundation Stage, the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including policies and procedures for the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding), and the school's self-evaluation of its work. The inspection team received 59 questionnaires from parents or carers, 110 questionnaires from pupils and 15 questionnaires from staff at the point of inspection.

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

- What are the schools targets for pupils' attainment in the current academic year and are pupils on track to achieve their targets?
- What is the reason for any variation in the progress and achievement of groups of pupils and are current systems of support and intervention effective?
- What has the school done to raise the quality of teaching and learning and has this been effective? Has the school's leadership been effective at all levels and have school leaders taken the necessary steps to bring about improvement since the last inspection?

## Information about the school

Featherstone is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils enter Reception from one of two local authority feeder nurseries. A large proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic communities and an above average number speak English as an additional language. The number known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the number identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. A private provider offers before- and after-school childcare facilities on site, which are not part of this inspection.

Since the last inspection there has been a complete change of senior management team. The current acting headteacher takes up a substantive role in school in January 2012. There is currently an acting deputy headteacher who is temporarily non-class based and the school is currently advertising to fill the deputy headteacher role on a permanent basis. There has also been a change of special educational needs coordinator and six new teachers 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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Featherstone Primary School provides a satisfactory education. Staffing changes have hindered school progress and proposals for expanding the school have halted improvements in the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new senior leadership team has improved the use of data and developed satisfactory self-evaluation processes. Many aspects of leadership and management are new and roles are still being developed. However, the new team are moving at a rapid pace. Consequently, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Children usually join the school with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. Cohorts vary, as does their performance across the different areas of learning. Children are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the end of this phase are broadly in line with expectations. Progress is satisfactory across the rest of the school, although it is good in some classes. Last year's Year 6 pupils did not all make sufficient progress and attainment was lower than that reached nationally. New systems of collecting and analysing data and careful monitoring of progress have identified individuals and groups not making sufficient progress. Action has been taken to address this. Progress is now beginning to increase steadily and the attainment of current pupils is rising. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Their current progress is at least in line with other pupils. Although they do not always achieve as well as other pupils, the gap is closing, particularly in reading and writing where they receive some good quality interventions. Some staff lack sufficient training or guidance in implementing revised individual learning plans. Consequently, there are inconsistencies in the quality of the support provided in the classroom. Behaviour across the school is consistently good. The school has worked hard this term to raise attendance levels which are now around the national average. It is also working with the educational welfare service to improve pupils' punctuality.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with good teaching seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in some year groups. However, not all staff plan well enough with their teaching assistants to maximise outcomes. Where pupils' progress is assessed during lessons, teachers then make adaptations for those who learn quickly. This is not yet happening in every class effectively. Expectations are sometimes too low for those who learn more slowly and they are capable of producing more than is required of them. Individual targets are not referred to sufficiently during lessons or in the marking of work. The large majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but a few pupils' concentration wanes if they are

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left listening for too long and the aspirations of some pupils are too low. Features of the best lessons are a brisk pace, active learning, accurate explanations and skilled questioning that challenge pupils' thinking. In weaker lessons, instructions are unclear and not all pupils receive effective support. Teachers have received training to improve the quality of teaching, but this has not yet eradicated all weak practice.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It builds effectively on pupils' interests in the Early Years Foundation Stage and helps them move into the National Curriculum, whatever their starting point. Good emphasis is given to understanding letters and sounds. The school provides many enriching opportunities to enhance the curriculum and has recently extended the range of popular extra-curricular provision. There are many opportunities to write at length for the majority of pupils because there has been a whole-school priority on writing. However, there is not always the same expectation for those who find learning more difficult as their needs tend to be covered through interventions outside of the classroom. Topic work is carefully chosen to engage the pupils, and work on the 'Hobbit Hole' in the school grounds has begun with the intention of the project being used to fulfil all aspects of the curriculum. There is an integrated topic based curriculum running in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2 pupils are taught in discrete subject areas. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils confirm that they feel well cared for and are safe.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
  - giving additional support to teachers new to the school
  - sharing more widely the good practice that already exists within school
  - improving the quality of the tasks set for pupils in lessons, ensuring they focus on improving learning
  - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more effectively.
  
- Raise standards, by:
  - ensuring the differing needs of learners are better accounted for in lessons through the better use of assessment information in planning
  - assessing pupils' work during lessons
  - making regular reference to pupils' targets and ensure the marking of pupils' work shows them how to improve
  - raising the aspirations of some of the pupils through effective challenge.
  
- Further improve the capacity of new senior and middle leaders, by:
  - prioritising strategic planning and development
  - building capacity into the whole staff team and develop a shared

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responsibility for improving standards and teaching and learning.

- Improve the quality of the outdoor learning opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so they are able to freely access activities inside and outside.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Where teaching is good, learning and progress are improving quickly. The vast majority of pupils enjoy their learning and are progressing and achieving satisfactorily. An example of enthusiasm for learning is when Year 2 pupils showed keenness in turning their sentences into ‘super sentences’ using more exciting vocabulary and a range of adjectives and adverbs. Staff and pupils make good use of the interactive white boards in lessons to aid learning. Current school data shows pupils in this academic year are now on track to achieve the expected levels of attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils are now involved in setting their targets and most know where they are and what they need to do to achieve those targets. Targeted individual support, mostly in reading and writing, ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or difficulties are progressing in line with other pupils. Through its improving use of data the school has identified that there are differences in the performance of some groups of pupils. It is starting to investigate this and adapt teaching and support accordingly, to ensure that all groups make the progress expected of them.

Pupils say they feel safe. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently good. The school encourages pupils to be aware of how to collectively address any incidences of bullying. They adopt healthy lifestyles by recognising the importance of eating fruit and vegetables in their diet and keeping hydrated. There is a good take up of sports and physical activity. Pupils make a strong contribution to the school community by taking on a number of special roles and responsibilities. The school council, for example, takes their responsibilities seriously. However, generally there are too few opportunities for pupils to get out into the wider community. A recent link with another school is beneficial, but too early to have made an impact. Pupils’ attendance has improved following school initiatives and is now broadly average. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils do have some time for reflection, for example in class assemblies. However, pupils’ cultural awareness has not been sufficiently developed given the rich range of cultures represented in the school population.

*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:	3

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Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. The best lessons are based on a through knowledge of pupils' interests and skills, and in meeting individual needs. Here pupils get down to learning quickly and are engaged in activities that challenge their thinking and existing knowledge and staff continually assess pupils throughout the lesson. However, sometimes the pace is laboured and tasks lack clarity. Despite a focus on writing, pupils are not always extending their writing quickly enough and expectations are not sufficiently high in all classes. There is sometimes a lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils, while the needs of the lower attaining pupils are not sufficiently identified. Target setting has improved, but teachers do not consistently refer to these in lessons or in their commentary in pupils' books. Marking of work is beginning to be more consistent, and is of satisfactory quality. However, not all staff are completely confident in assessing pupils' work against national curriculum levels or using the data to best effect to plan their lessons. The use of assessment in measuring the effectiveness of target setting and the quality of learning have improved, but this is not consistent. Some classrooms are not as vibrant and stimulating as others. Teachers new to the school or to the profession are not always supported effectively enough or monitored sufficiently rigorously. The school is not making the most of its best teaching by sharing good practice more widely.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school's approach to teaching is different between the key stages. It is too early to assess whether the creative approach to the curriculum in Key Stage 1, where topics cover several subject areas, is effective in ensuring sufficient progression, fully utilising pupils' existing skills and knowledge, or maximising opportunities for reinforcing literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum has increased with additional enrichment activities, such

<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

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as trips out and visitors in, as well as the extended extra-curricular timetable in a very wide range of areas, such as drama, chess, sign language, guitar, steel band and sports.

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school environment is safe and pupils’ understand about how to keep themselves and others safe. They know who best to approach when there is a concern. The school promotes positive behaviour effectively and pupils are responding well to this. Staff understand the procedures to follow in order to protect children and training in this respect is up to date. Transition arrangements are satisfactory.

*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>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership at the school is only just beginning to stabilise following a period of turbulence. The senior leadership team includes representation from those staff responsible for inclusion and the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of the middle management roles are new and not fully embedded. Subject leaders are beginning to become better informed by taking more of a role in monitoring planning, assessment and pupils’ work. Until recently, there has been too little collective accountability for school improvement and raising standards. The acting headteacher has assessed the school accurately, and has put together a realistic school development plan with assistance from his team who are committed, hard working and have a real vision for the school. The school has been slow to address all of the necessary actions from the previous inspection, but the new leadership team have moved swiftly since being in post and have taken immediate action. Many new initiatives have been put into place, particularly in the last term, and these are now beginning to make an impact on raising the quality of teaching and levels of achievement, but it is not yet consistent across the school. The team have yet to prioritise all of the actions identified to develop the school, and to ensure management time is spent to best effect on the things that will make the most difference. Responsibilities are currently not always equitably shared. The school ensures it meets current requirements for safeguarding pupils, promoting equality and developing community cohesion. Members of the governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have an increasing presence within school. However, some of their duties are exerted without the necessary vigour or formality and they remain too reliant on information given to them by the school. The growth of the



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governing body has been hindered by not having a full team until very recently and by some complex school issues which have detracted from being able to monitor and evaluate wider aspects of the school’s work. For example, there has been no formal monitoring of the school’s Early Years Foundation Stage. The school endeavours to build on the positive relationships it has with parents and carers in Reception. It has improved communication channels with parents and carers and is seeking to improve links with them in the rest of the school, where not all are involved with their children’s education. The school understands the benefits of partnership working and is developing a wider range of professional partners to advance its work.

*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>3</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>3</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>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Featherstone Primary makes good provision for children in Reception. It ensures the welfare, learning and development requirements are met and is well led and managed by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. The provision and outcomes for children are accurately evaluated and there is a sensible development plan. There are regular checks on the safety of the learning environment to minimise risk.

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. They settle quickly and make rapid progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their speaking and listening skills. They soon learn the rules of being part of a group, the high expectations of the adults and the boundaries they are set, quickly adapting to routines and equally able to operate independently or play together. There is a very happy atmosphere in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments, although the outdoor area is still not used as fully. Since the last inspection there has been a focus on improving the

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quality of the outdoor area. However, this is currently placed on hold awaiting the outcome of proposals to expand the school. The environment is changed regularly in accordance with children’s interests and developing needs. There are areas which encourage independent investigation and the balance between those activities directed by adults and those that children choose to initiate themselves is highly appropriate. By the end of the Reception Year, most boys and girls have achieved the early learning goals required of them, including their language, literacy, problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. Staff ensure that any who have not reached the required levels in all areas of learning are fully supported into Year 1. There are regular detailed observations of children that inform children’s individual records, their overall assessments and the future planning.

*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

A very large majority of parents and carers agree with the questionnaire statements. They make positive comments about the start their child had made in Reception and their children’s enjoyment. A very small minority of parents and carers thought their child was making insufficient progress and that the school was not meeting their child’s needs. Inspectors looked at pupils’ progress, which is improving, particularly where teaching is consistently good. A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe the school addresses bad behaviour effectively. Inspectors spoke to pupils who said that behaviour is good and that new initiatives had been successful. Inspectors are confident that the school has introduced measures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour but this continues to be an area to be worked upon, along with small numbers of bullying behaviour, which the school is keen to rectify. A small minority of parents and carers believe their views are not taken seriously enough, but this is already something that the school has identified as a priority for development and it is keen to engage with them. Some parents and carers believe the acting headteacher is already beginning to bring about positive changes, including increasing the range of after-school activities. There was an isolated comment regarding the safety of pupils, but inspectors investigated this fully and believe that the school has improved procedures for pupils’ safety and has reduced any further risks.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Featherstone 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	42	29	49	5	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	42	30	51	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	29	38	64	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	27	31	53	8	14	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	36	29	49	3	5	4	7
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	15	25	40	68	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	34	39	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	22	34	58	4	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	32	36	61	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	25	32	54	7	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	22	35	59	8	14	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	39	27	46	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	20	34	31	53	6	10	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.**



8 December 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Featherstone Primary School, Birmingham, B23 6PR**

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to speak with so many of you during your lessons and with those pupils who met us as a group. Your views are really important to us. I am delighted to see how quickly you have settled into the Reception class this term. Your school leaders are working really hard to improve the school and to make sure you all do as well as you can. In your questionnaires you said that you did not feel that your views were listened too enough. Some of your parents or carers felt the same, so we have mentioned this to your leaders.

These are the main things we noticed.

- Most of you enjoy coming to Featherstone Primary and your behaviour and attendance are improving.
- Those of you with special roles take these very seriously indeed.
- Those of you who find some things difficult are given good individual support with your reading and writing.
- Teaching and learning is good in the Reception class and a small number of other classes, but not in every class – so you are not all doing as well as you could.
- Although most of you will achieve your targets, you do not always reach the levels that you are capable of or of those expected for your age.
- The leaders in your school have recently put in place many things to improve the school.
- The outdoor area for the Reception children is not as good quality as the indoor provision and children still do not go in and out completely freely.

In order to improve even further, I have asked the school to do the following things:

- make sure that all of your lessons are good or even better
- raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- make sure that the people who lead your school develop well in their roles
- further develop the outdoor provision for the Reception children.

You all can help by coming to school every day and on time, making sure you tell your teacher if the work is too easy or hard, and trying as hard as you can in lessons. Please always be kind to others and think about the consequences of your actions or words.

Yours sincerely

Jane Melbourne  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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