

# Felmore Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	133573
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	385876
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Ronald Hall

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>	424
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Faulkner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Mulcahy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 May 2011
<b>School address</b>	Davenants Pitsea Basildon SS13 1QX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 729885
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	385876



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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Ronald Hall	Additional Inspector
Janice Williams	Additional Inspector
Fatiha Maitland	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent almost ten hours observing teaching and visited 24 lessons. In all, 17 teachers were observed teaching. In addition, inspectors held discussions with individual pupils, members of the governing body, the senior leadership team, a representative of the local authority and a parent. Inspectors heard pupils read in both Year 2 and Year 6. The team took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school improvement plan, school policies and teachers' planning. In addition, questionnaires from 77 parents and carers and those from pupils and members of staff were analysed.

## Information about the school

Felmore is a much larger than average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are White British and the proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is larger than that found nationally. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average. Many of these pupils also have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is larger than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage has two Reception classes. The school has achieved the Activemark award and Healthy School status. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

A number of changes have been made to the leadership of the school over the past year. The current headteacher took up the substantive position at the beginning of January 2012 following a period at the school as an advisory headteacher. A new deputy headteacher was appointed at the start of this term. The whole leadership team, including the governing body, has been restructured. Several new teachers have joined the school with a number also leaving. The school was subject to a Notice to Improve when it was last inspected.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It successfully promotes pupils' welfare within a very caring environment, as parents, carers and pupils all testify. It is not yet good, due to historic weaknesses in pupils' attainment and inconsistencies in the effectiveness of teaching. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005 her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children in Reception make good progress from very low starting points. At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment remains low but is improving. While pupils' progress over time is satisfactory it is accelerating quickly. This is especially noticeable in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are rapidly making up gaps in their previous learning. Reading skills at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are average.
- Teaching across the school is satisfactory. The new leadership is driving improvements in teaching, and the percentage of good or better teaching is rising rapidly, resulting in improving attainment and progress. Variability in the quality of teaching includes: inconsistent use of marking to help pupils improve their work and a little inconsistency in the moderation of work. The teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Reception and Key Stage 1 lacks consistency.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe and secure, their attendance is rising and most have good attitudes towards learning.
- The leadership and management team evaluates the school accurately and uses the information from self-evaluation activities, such as monitoring of teaching, to inform its plans for improvement. Consequently it has secured marked improvements in performance and particularly in rates of progress. There are

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good links with other local schools and good communications with parents and carers. The curriculum is broad and well balanced but does not as yet provide enough opportunities to develop writing skills across all subjects.

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

- Raise attainment by providing wider opportunities for extended writing across the whole curriculum.
- Raise attainment by ensuring that the teaching of letter sounds is taught consistently in both Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Move the teaching from satisfactory to good by:
  - ensuring the consistency of the moderation of work to ensure all work is assessed accurately and, thus, provides accurate assessment data for future planning
  - ensuring that marking is used consistently to enter into a written dialogue with pupils to develop their understanding of how they can improve their work.

**Main report****Achievement of pupils**

Attainment on entry to the school is very low. Children learn well in Reception. This was observed, for example, when children were writing about the Jubilee celebrations. Children shared ideas, listened to each other's views and demonstrated a good basic understanding of the event. Children leave the provision a little below age expected levels.

Attainment in reading in Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. Most pupils are developing their reading satisfactorily. However, younger pupils are not always able to work out unfamiliar words because of inconsistent knowledge of phonics. Attainment in writing is improving but remains low because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practice their skills across all areas of the curriculum. A prolonged period of underachievement and poor teaching in the past has restricted the levels of attainment achieved by pupils. Improvements in teaching are now resulting in the accelerating progress that pupils across the school are making. This is particularly noticeable in lessons in Years 5 and 6. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 5, pupils made excellent progress as they explored percentages and interest rates. Pupils challenged each other, supported each other's learning and tested out a range of hypotheses in order to achieve their tasks. However, there is still some inconsistency in the progress being made in different classes due to the variation in the quality of teaching across the school, particularly in relation to the accuracy of some data used for future planning. In addition, because of the legacy of the past, achievement over time currently remains satisfactory despite accelerating progress.

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There are no significant differences between groups and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their peers nationally. Support for these pupils has improved considerably over the past year. New intervention programmes and the raising of teaching assistant's skills to support these pupils, has resulted in marked improvements in their achievement. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make progress above that of their peers nationally.

In the questionnaires parents and carers expressed the view that recent changes had resulted in their children making good progress now. The inspection judged this to be a fair reflection of the school in the context of accelerating progress but with some past underachievement to still make up.

### **Quality of teaching**

Although teaching is satisfactory it is rapidly improving across the school. Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In Year 4 for example, pupils studied the monarchy and how people from varying backgrounds live. Pupils demonstrated effective empathy skills and developed a good understanding of others. Teaching is rapidly improving due to good leadership and management. However, inconsistency in the way some teachers grade and then moderate work results in the data they use for planning not always being accurate. Teachers generally put learning into a meaningful context and make activities purposeful. Teaching assistants help pupils to recall and build on their previous skills by asking searching questions. Teachers in lessons check pupils' learning and progress at regular intervals, providing additional support where needed. Their verbal feedback to pupils is helpful because it identifies clearly what pupils need to do to make their work better. However, marking is inconsistent and does not always support pupils in guiding them on how to improve their work.

Despite the development of phonics this year, its teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1 is still inconsistent. Pupils are not routinely encouraged to use letter sounds to read and write unfamiliar words across the curriculum. There is too much emphasis on letter names rather than sounds and so pupils sometimes struggle to build words. Teaching supports all pupils from the most-able to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teaching assistants provide one-to-one support for the latter and their specialist knowledge is having an increasingly positive effect. Teaching assistants have benefited from additional professional development and support to improve the effectiveness with which they are able to help meet the needs of pupils. Teachers make good and regular use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support and enhance teaching and learning.

The parents and carers in the questionnaires acknowledged the extent to which the quality of teaching has improved across the school this year. The inspection findings confirm this view.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

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Pupils' behaviour over time is good. It contributes to a safe and orderly school environment. The school's clear behaviour management procedures are consistently applied. However, on the very few occasions when tasks do not fully engage pupils or when they are asked to sit for too long without active involvement, some pupils become restless, chat and lose focus. Pupils, including those with identified behavioural difficulties, are well aware of the school's high expectations and strategies for managing and improving their behaviour and try hard to respond. As a result, improvements over time are clearly evident for individuals and groups, including for those with particular needs. Most parents and carers and the majority of pupils are positive about behaviour in the school and agree that lessons are not disrupted as a result of poor behaviour. This was also confirmed by a review which the local authority undertook a few weeks before the inspection. However, a few feel that some of the schools' pupils with identified behavioural needs cause some disruption for other pupils. This concern was not borne out during the inspection and the evidence scrutinised indicated only relatively minor incidents had occurred which had been dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils take a real pride in their school and understand their role in it. As one pupil commented, 'You know we failed our last inspection. We didn't think that was right, but you know we are not going to fail this one, because we're not going to let it!' Others demonstrated real pleasure when inspectors stated they were enjoying being in the school.

All parents and carers say that their children feel safe in school. This is confirmed by pupils who say bullying is rare. They say that the school takes all forms of bullying seriously and deals effectively with any incidents that occur and inspection findings reflect this. Pupils also say that racist incidents are uncommon and this is confirmed in school records. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, for example name-calling and cyber-bullying and know the steps to take to address them. The school has worked very hard and successfully raised attendance from below average to average.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good and parents and carers share this view. The new headteacher has brought about rapid and major changes across the school. Teaching has improved and, with it, rates of progress have rapidly increased. Consequently, pupils are making up for lost ground in the past and their attainment is rising. The headteacher has developed a robust leadership and management team, which is effective at all levels. The new governing body are challenging, yet supportive of the school. They have a clear and accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has rightly focused her energies on improving teaching and ensuring that monitoring, tracking and assessment systems are robust. She, together with the other senior members of staff, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Strategic planning is focused sharply on what will make the most difference. The monitoring of teaching and learning and the modelling of good practice, along with effectively tailored professional development, are used well to continuously improve the quality

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of lessons. All staff share the leadership team's drive for continued improvement.

The curriculum contains a wide range of opportunities, for example through the teaching of cross curricular topics such as the Jubilee and various cultural themes. Productive partnerships have a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, pupils use the local high school facilities to enhance learning. The well-established links with parents and carers were exemplified by parents and carers observed working with pupils in the school during the inspection. The school is a focus for the local community through a range of out-of-school activities it hosts. The visits, clubs and other activities for pupils are evidence of the opportunities provided to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' awareness of what it is like to live in a culturally diverse society like modern Britain is relatively well developed.

The school cares well for pupils from a range of backgrounds, and there is no discrimination. The progress of different groups is well monitored to ensure none is underachieving. There are effective procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. These meet government guidelines and include high quality checks on adults and a carefully planned approach to managing the safety of pupils.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved rapidly. These successful actions, made in challenging circumstances demonstrate that leaders and managers have good capacity to make further improvements.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Felmore Primary School, Basildon, SS13 1QX**

Thank you so much for your warm, friendly and inviting welcome when we inspected your school recently. You rightly take a pride in your school. We feel that Felmore Primary is a satisfactory school. The new headteacher is working well with staff and members of the governing body to rapidly improve your school. The following are some of the features we found:

- Teaching is satisfactory but rapidly improving which means you are now making better progress.
- Although your attainment is still low, due to a history of weaker teaching in the past, your learning in lessons shows how well you are now making up for this. All groups of pupils in the school progress equally well, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- You all said how safe you felt and we agree you are all well looked after. Your attendance has improved as well.
- The headteacher and her staff have made significant changes to your school, which have brought about positive results. The curriculum is well balanced and provides you with a broad education.

To improve your school further we have asked the leaders and managers to:

- provide you with greater opportunities to write across the whole curriculum
- ensure that the teaching of letter sounds is taught consistently
- improve the quality of teaching further by ensuring teachers' marking helps you to understand how to improve your work
- ensure that they all assess your work accurately and so plan effectively for your next steps in learning.

You can help your school further by continuing to support your teachers to improve your school.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall  
Lead inspector

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