

Inspection of a good school: Featherby Infant and Nursery School

Allington Road, Gillingham, Kent ME8 6PD

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

Featherby Infant and Nursery School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils belong to a warm and nurturing community and enjoy coming to school. They happily discuss the core values of the 'Featherby family' and demonstrate these confidently in their day-to-day interactions. Children in the nursery quickly settle into positive routines. From this early stage of learning, all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds and experiences, are supported by passionate and positive adults. The outdoor environment provides pupils with a wide range of opportunities to apply their learning.

Pupils talk positively about what they are learning within and beyond the taught curriculum. For example, pupils talk about the importance of Florence Nightingale with just as much enthusiasm as they talk about what they have been doing at cooking club.

All adults have high expectations for behaviour and these are consistently modelled to ensure that pupils feel safe and show respect. There are consistent approaches in place to ensure positive behaviours are embedded, including earning 'golden tickets'. Pupils say that bullying is very rare but when it does happen adults work quickly to put a stop to it.

Leaders want the best for all pupils. They are dedicated to making improvements to the curriculum to help even more pupils succeed.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed a new curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, but it is in the early stages of being taught. Staff are receiving training to ensure that they have the subject knowledge to teach all pupils to know more and remember more. However, the order that pupils are learning knowledge is not yet building specifically on what they already know. For example, the vocabulary selected to teach across the wider curriculum is not always mapped accurately to what pupils have learned. Part of this important work has been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and staff absence. Leaders are in the process of reviewing and adapting the order of what pupils are taught throughout the

school. For example, in mathematics, teachers have quickly identified gaps in pupils' knowledge. This has led to a change in the order of what is taught and the length of time it is taught for. These adaptations are allowing more time for pupils to learn the important knowledge they will rely on heavily in the future. In the early years, adults are providing children with a range of planned activities to develop their quality of talk. Leaders are now also focusing on refining the order of what is taught across other areas of learning for children to succeed.

Leaders and staff are ambitious that every pupil should learn to read. There is a new phonics programme in place that all staff are using consistently to support all pupils. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and are provided with additional help to catch up quickly. This includes reading books that are matched to the sounds being practised in lessons. Pupils across the school enjoy a range of different books. They value being rewarded for their reading efforts, including the opportunity to use the book vending machine.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included well in lessons and are supported by knowledgeable staff. The interim special educational needs coordinator has begun important work to check that all pupils receive the support they need to succeed in their learning. For some pupils, this involves the use of computer-based programmes to secure prior knowledge before moving on to more complex learning.

The school successfully promotes pupils' wider development. Pupils have opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions within the curriculum. They are also encouraged to celebrate their individual differences through assemblies, trips to local places of interest and participation in fundraising activities. After-school clubs are well attended and enjoyed by a variety of pupils.

Staff feel that leaders consider their views when making decisions. Those staff who were spoken to particularly appreciated leaders' attempts to make their workload more manageable. They are proud members of the school community and are positive about the developments taking place.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are clear about how to identify, help and manage any concerns they have about pupils. Systems in place are robust and all staff show an understanding of the importance of clear reporting and timely action. Pupils know what to do if they are worried about something and have a range of ways to share their concerns with adults. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to support vulnerable pupils and their families. They provide regular updates to parents on important issues, including the most recent online risks pupils might face. Leaders keep abreast of the needs of the local community and provide relevant training to keep all staff well informed. They are resolute in their approach to providing a safe environment for all.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Content that leaders have identified as being important is not yet being taught in an appropriate order. Some children struggle to remember and apply the key words they have been taught to newer learning. Leaders should carefully review the order that vocabulary is taught to pupils to ensure that new vocabulary is not introduced on top of weak foundations. For this reason, the transition arrangements have been applied.
- Not all adults yet have the subject-specific knowledge required to make the most appropriate pedagogical choices in order to help pupils know more and remember more. Staff are receiving subject-specific training and support to improve subject knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders should continue to develop the subject knowledge of all adults, so they can support the accurate selection of how to teach new or abstract knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good in March 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145042
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10203150
Type of school	Nursery and Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	294
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Owen McColgan
Headteacher	Amy Eccles
Website	www.featherby-inf.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Featherby Infant and Nursery School converted to become an academy school in September 2017. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the Maritime Academy Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of trustees, the executive headteacher, the headteacher and senior leaders, the chair of the local academy council, other school leaders, parents, staff and pupils.
- Early reading, mathematics and history were considered as part of this inspection. The inspector met with the subject leaders of these curriculum areas, visited lessons across the school, met with pupils and class teachers. The inspector also looked at pupils'

work and heard pupils read. Science curriculum planning was also considered with the science subject leader as part of the inspection.

- Arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed by scrutinising safeguarding policies, processes and written records, staff recruitment checks and training records. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils.
- The inspector took account of the views expressed by 27 staff and 35 parents, including 25 free-text comments through Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Hanna Miller, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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