



Featherstone Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103318
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276889
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Glenville Drive
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		West Midlands B23 6PR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3732529
Number on roll	195	Fax number	0121 3776347
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S MacFarlane
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Tim Starkey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Featherstone is a smaller than average primary school. Children enter the Reception class with skill levels that are below those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average. Just over half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number of these are at an early stage of learning English. The school serves a disadvantaged area and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Its own judgement of its work is accurate in most respects but too generous in its view of overall effectiveness. Issues identified in the previous report have been addressed well and the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The good provision for pupils' personal development which begins in the Reception class continues throughout the school. The children are provided with a good start to other areas of their education in the Reception class. Good emphasis is placed on developing their basic skills, although a small minority do not attain the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 6, standards are slightly below average and most pupils achieve satisfactorily in English, mathematics and science.

Teaching is satisfactory. Good support is provided for those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, enabling them to make good progress. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is adequate, ensuring that they make satisfactory progress. Although improving, teachers' expectations are not always high enough for the more able pupils and this leads to a lack of challenge in lessons, particularly in writing and mathematics.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst correctly identifying the underachievement and introducing measures to rectify it, senior staff have not been sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that teachers consistently challenge the more able pupils and that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the more able pupils are given consistently challenging work, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Raise achievement in writing by providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length.
- Ensure senior staff and subject leaders are more rigorous in monitoring teaching to ensure improvement is sufficient for all individual pupils and groups of pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are below levels expected for their age. Some children make good progress although a small minority have yet to achieve the goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1, particularly in their literacy and numeracy. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school, although there is some underachievement by the more able pupils in writing and mathematics. Improved use of assessment information and better procedures for tracking the pupils' progress are helping to improve pupils' achievements. However, there is still some way to go.

Challenging targets are set for pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6, and these targets were exceeded in both English and mathematics in 2005. Standards in Year 6 are broadly average in reading but slightly below in mathematics and writing. They are improving in other year groups because teachers are beginning to make better use of assessment information when planning work. The small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language are provided with good support, enabling them to make good progress in their acquisition of English. Pupils with learning difficulties are provided with adequate support, enabling them to learn at the same rate as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils of all ages say that they enjoy coming to school and are positive about what they do. They are happy and settled and relate well to adults and to each other. Behaviour is good overall because pupils know what is expected of them. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. The school works very successfully with a local special school, with pupils from each school integrating into appropriate lessons at the other school, for example, in physical education. The school council is developing its role effectively, leading to changes and improvements that reflect pupils' own wishes and views. For example, the council asked for a quiet area to be established for pupils who wanted time to sit and be quiet. Pupils report that this is being well used, and they are now redesigning and improving the area further. They have also raised money, which has been spent on new games for classrooms.

Pupils are aware of which foods are healthy and of the need for regular exercise. They talk confidently about the dangers of drugs. They enjoy their out-of-school visits, such as to 'The Wizard of Oz,' and say that they would like more of these enjoyable and educational experiences. Pupils make a positive contribution to school, for example, when they train to become 'Featherstone buddies,' a system which they say has reduced the amount of bullying in the school. Pupils are reasonably well prepared for their future life, although their literacy skills could be stronger.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Reception, activities are interesting and stimulating and children make good progress overall because of the good teaching in this class. Good ongoing assessment encourages children to work hard. In other year groups, teaching and learning are mainly satisfactory, although good teaching was seen in some lessons. A better feature of teaching is the good management of behaviour by the staff, ensuring most pupils behave well and get on with their work.

Where teaching is good, it enthuses pupils, challenging and encouraging them to do their best. The tasks are well matched to pupils' ability, good questioning helps them understand easily, and practical activities keep them interested in their work. In satisfactory lessons, the level of challenge is not as good and activities sometimes go on for too long, which diminishes the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and limits progress for the more able pupils. In some classes the use of too many mundane worksheets limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. The marking and assessment of pupils' work are satisfactory and teachers are encouraging pupils to become more aware of how they might improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is broad, balanced and generally meets the pupils' needs. Planning does not always identify how teachers might provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects. Provision for pupils for whom English is not their first language is particularly good, enabling these pupils to access the full curriculum at an early stage. The varied school clubs effectively contribute to the pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum and are well attended. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' awareness of the wider world. There are good opportunities for performance; for example, the school choir is currently rehearsing songs for the forthcoming Festival of Cultures.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for, guides and supports the pupils well. Pupils feel safe at school, and trust the adults who work with them. Procedures for child protection are well established, and are fully understood by staff. Health and safety procedures are well developed and rigorous. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils have access to suitable support. Parents appreciate this and think that their children are well cared for. Procedures for improving the tracking of pupils' progress are being developed but are not yet able to ensure that individual pupils and groups of pupils progress as well as they might. However, early intervention by support staff for pupils who are learning English as an additional language and regular support for specific ethnic groups have ensured that there is no underachievement by any of these groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a clear understanding of what the school is doing well and what needs to be addressed to ensure improvements. However, in its self-evaluation the school judged its effectiveness to be good rather than satisfactory because it did not take sufficient account of what still needs to be done. The Foundation Stage is satisfactorily managed and the secure start the children

receive is beginning to have an impact on standards further up the school. Improved monitoring procedures are identifying weaknesses in teaching. However, senior staff have not yet had sufficient impact on standards by ensuring all teachers make good use of the available assessment information in their lesson planning. Subject leaders have not yet focused sufficiently on how teachers might raise the achievement of the more able pupils. Leadership has been effective in identifying the needs of different ethnic groups and has put in place good quality support. For example, the performance of Afro-Caribbean boys in tests is frequently better than that seen nationally. There are good opportunities for the pupils to express their views through the school council and these are valued and acted upon by the school. For example, 'buddy benches' have been installed on the playground. Considerable effort is made by the school to consult parents, and feedback from questionnaires is used to address areas of concern. The governors are supportive, fully involved and hold the school to account for the standards achieved.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently.

We particularly like these things

- Your good behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The good relationships you have with one another and with the staff.
- The interesting and wide range of activities that you all undertake.
- You are well looked after and given good support by the adults in school.
- The way you are becoming aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking part in more exercise.

These are the things we have suggested those in charge of the school do to make it better

- Ensure that you are all given work that is hard enough and challenges you to do better, especially in maths and writing.
- Give you lots of regular opportunities to practise your writing skills.
- Ensure the adults in charge of the school and individual subjects take more responsibility for making your lessons even better.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead inspector