

# Felsted Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114875
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311737
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Frith

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 on roll</b>	
School (total)	251
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Helen Sims
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Lawrence Garside
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 April 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Watch House Green Felsted Dunmow Essex CM6 3EB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01371820215
<b>Fax number</b>	01371820950

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Felsted Primary has slightly more pupils than an average size primary school. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is low. Children start school in the Reception class of the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment which is broadly similar to that usually seen in children of this age. However, sometimes attainment on entry is lower, as with the current Year 2. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Pupil mobility in some years is high, as in the current Year 6. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has achieved the sports Activemark and the Bronze Award for Eco Schools.

The Little Acorns childcare provision shares the school site but is not managed by the school's governing body. This provision is inspected separately.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress. Outstanding care, guidance and support promote their excellent personal development and well-being and encourage them to feel secure and valued. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and they respond very well to the challenges set. Parents are very supportive of the school and what it offers, as shown by the following representative comment: 'This is a wonderful school where the children are happy, with excellent teachers that care for them. They make good progress and we couldn't ask for more.'

Good leadership, management and governance result in the school providing good value for money. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leadership team provide strong leadership, aspects of which are exemplary. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has been particularly effective in creating a staff team who share this vision. Leaders and managers at all levels give outstanding direction and support and phase leaders act as very good role models through their excellent teaching. Staff morale is high and all staff are committed to raising standards and promoting pupils' well-being. By the time pupils leave school, standards in English, mathematics and science are generally above average. In some years, English and mathematics standards are well above average, as in 2008. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their investigative and enquiry skills in science and this is influencing science standards overall. Staff have resolved successfully the issues highlighted in the last inspection. For example, pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly. Good self-evaluation has led to the identification of appropriate priorities for action and, together with a continual cycle of improvement, show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of staff. Consequently, they respect and care for others, and behave exceptionally well. All these features create a very effective atmosphere for learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives and this is influencing what they do. Their excellent personal and social skills and good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT help prepare them exceptionally well for their future economic well-being.

Teaching is good because lessons are interesting and the pace of learning is usually brisk. The excellent use of 'talk partners' ensures that pupils are thoroughly involved in the lesson and not waiting for individual pupils to answer questions. Clear procedures for checking pupils' progress mean that staff can quickly identify any in danger of falling behind and provide them with effective support. The curriculum supports learning well because it is interesting, and stimulating. However, it is still a work in progress in respect of ensuring links between subjects are increasingly relevant to pupils' needs.

Staff work successfully to create an inclusive school community that is particularly effective in integrating pupils who start at Felsted school part-way through their primary education. Consequently, all pupils feel equally valued and achieve well. The pupils' excellent contribution to the community, together with the school's effective work in partnership with others, ensures the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Effective links with parents and local pre-school settings help children to settle well. Welfare provision is excellent and, together with helpful routines and clear expectations, ensures that children feel safe and quickly develop confidence. Staff place a high priority on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills and this work helps to support children's learning successfully across all areas. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding because activities are stimulating and children are interested in what they do. Planning is particularly effective because it takes good account of the children's interest as well as ensuring that children's learning develops systematically over time, across all areas. Activities link well together around a topic such as 'Dinosaurs', where children hunt for dinosaurs outside and decide whether they are carnivores or herbivores. This activity engages their full interest and stimulates their writing. Children work and play very well together and thoroughly enjoy school. Teaching is outstanding and work is matched very well to the children's range of abilities and interests. Through high quality regular observations and assessments, staff gain a very good understanding of children's needs, and give very effective support. Leadership and management are outstanding and reflected in the high aspirations of staff, who form a strong team. Excellent learning and development results in nearly all pupils working above the levels usually seen for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well in science as they do in English and mathematics by developing their skills of scientific investigation and enquiry.
- Build on the good start made in developing the curriculum so that it becomes more creative and increasingly challenging, and links between subjects more relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. This good achievement is a result of a concerted effort by staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have made particularly good progress this academic year in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are broadly average in Year 2 but this represents good progress from their below average starting point. In Key Stage 2, progress has accelerated and standards improved in the 2008 national assessments. Results were well above the provisional average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The school broadly met its challenging targets for English and mathematics. Standards are above average overall in the current Year 6. This represents good progress apart from the development of pupils' investigative skills in science. Focused support for pupils who require additional help with their learning is particularly effective in helping such pupils to meet the targets in their individual educational plans. Staff ensure that pupils who enter the school part-way through their primary school education settle well and make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils have high levels of confidence and self-esteem and this supports their very good ability to act independently. Their exemplary behaviour, very positive attitudes and excellent relationships contribute enormously to their progress in school and help to ensure that they are well-placed to take full advantage of future learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is good. There is keen competition for posts of responsibility within school, which are discharged in an exemplary fashion as shown by the enthusiastic play leaders. The recent presentation to the school governors by members of the Eco Council reflects the pupils' developing maturity and sense of citizenship. This is further enhanced by their many fund-raising initiatives for local, national and worldwide charities. Pupils show particularly good awareness of their local community, the diversity of modern Britain and the global community. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of the need to keep safe. They understand fully that bullying and harassment are wrong. Pupils develop the knowledge and skills to support their personal safety, including cycling proficiency, swimming and safe use of the internet. They are extremely aware of the need to keep fit and healthy and they participate enthusiastically in a range of sports and exercise activities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good detailed planning, based on accurate assessments of pupils' existing skills, is a feature of many lessons. Pupils learn well because activities hold their attention and interest and teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together to support and encourage them. Assessment is good and used effectively. Pupils of all abilities learn equally well because staff ensure that individual needs are met. A recent emphasis on developing pupils' verbal skills has been an outstanding success in improving the quality of learning. Pupils express their thoughts and feelings with confidence and listen carefully to each other's responses, thereby making their learning more relevant and secure. Lively discussions between pupils are an outstanding feature of many lessons and pupils are articulate when talking to adults. This also contributes considerably to developing their self-esteem and confidence. Teachers use a variety of methods, including the use of technology, lively presentation and sharp questioning techniques, to keep lessons moving at a good pace. In the relatively few lessons that are not so effective, the pace slows because teachers talk too much or pupils find activities insufficiently challenging.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a wide range of activities to supplement lessons covering the full National Curriculum. Clubs are well supported and make an excellent contribution to the pupils' personal development, helping them to keep fit and healthy and extending their interests and skills. The curriculum ensures good, continuing progress in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. However, it is not yet quite as successful in developing science, especially pupils' investigative and enquiry skills. Linking subjects together through topics like 'Transport' has been successful in generating enthusiasm and some high quality work from pupils. This initiative continues but

is not yet established fully across the school and not exploited to develop the widest possible range of skills and interest in each subject.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils are outstanding, and such individual pupils and their families are understood well by the school. Effective links with other individuals and agencies has resulted in pastoral care that takes a holistic approach to supporting the pupils' learning. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is particularly good. The use of pupil-friendly Individual Education Plans, and the very good use of teaching assistants, means that all pupils can access the curriculum and experience success. Intervention programmes are especially effective in accelerating pupils' progress. All requirements for child protection are in place and suitable risk assessments are undertaken. Pupils know their targets, and the formal tracking of pupils' progress is supplemented by high quality feedback within the lessons as to how the pupils can improve their work. Nevertheless, marking is variable. There are some excellent examples where pupils respond very well to teachers' comments but, very occasionally, guidance is not clear enough. Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school and confirm the view that their children are very well cared for, guided and supported. As one commented, 'Teachers go that extra mile to help their pupils'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership is very successfully focused on raising standards and promoting pupils' personal development within an environment where all are encouraged to do well. The new leadership team has very successfully taken up their responsibilities and is very well supported by subject leaders. Consequently, both provision and standards have improved. The impact of their work is seen in the good progress made by learners, and pupils' sense of security and well-being. Good systems are in place to check how well the school is doing and identify what it could do better but not all are involved in this process. However, these systems have been instrumental in supporting the school's drive for continued improvement and have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and the good tracking of pupils' progress is helping to set challenging targets. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good but staff are not fully effective in monitoring and evaluating the impact of this area of their work. Through good work in committees, and effective monitoring and evaluation, governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They fulfil their responsibilities well.





## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Felsted Primary School, Felsted, Dunmow CM6 3EB

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school so enjoyable. We liked being in lessons, talking to you and the staff and looking at your work. We agree with you and think that Felsted Primary is a good school. Mr Garside, staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. If you read on you will see some of the things we found out.

We were really pleased to see that you thoroughly enjoy school and behave exceptionally well. You get on very well with each other and make friends. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and this is influencing what you eat and how much exercise you take. Please try to keep this up as it becomes even more important to exercise and eat a balanced diet as you get older. You feel safe in school because staff look after you extremely well. You find most lessons interesting and really enjoy the clubs and school visits. These clubs are helping to develop your skills and interests very well.

You make good progress so that by the time you leave school in Year 6 you reach standards that are above those we sometimes see in children of that age. You do particularly well in English and mathematics but we think you could do even better in science. We have asked the teachers to make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to improve your scientific skills through developing more investigations in order to find out why things happen. We know that you like learning through topics, because you find this work more interesting. Therefore, we have asked staff to develop more of this kind of work to give you plenty of opportunities to develop your skills and interests. We are sure that you will respond well and do your best.

Thank you once again. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Frith

Lead inspector