

Feering CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115106
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311834
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs H J Rowe
Headteacher	Mr G Waters
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Coggeshall Road Feering Colchester Essex CO5 9QB
Telephone number	01376 570296
Fax number	01376 573209

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the school's overall effectiveness, the current progress of pupils, aspects of pupils' personal development and aspects of leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from external data, the information that the school has on tracking pupils' progress, the school self-evaluation form and lesson observations. Discussions were held with subject leaders, members of the governing body, the Local Authority link adviser and a group of Year 6 and Year 5 pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and the school's systems for safeguarding pupils were checked. Other aspects were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate within the report.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils come from the local community. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. Most pupils are White British. Whilst the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average, the proportion of pupils with statements, which detail their specific educational needs is double the national average. The number joining or leaving the school at various points of the school year is around average although those joining the school often have learning difficulties. Most children join the school with skills and abilities that are broadly typical of young children nationally. The school has just gained accreditation as a Healthy School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school; pupils consistently attain high standards and make excellent progress, academically and in their personal development. The majority of parents indicated their satisfaction on the pre-inspection questions. Letters from parents indicated how happy their children were in the school and how much they enjoyed it because of the opportunities the school provides. One parent wrote how pleased she was that her child was part of such a 'vibrant academic community'.

Historically pupils attained broadly average standards in Key Stage 1 and then pupils' progress accelerated as they went through the school. For the last two years, pupils have gained exceptionally high standards at the end of Year 6. Currently there is good year-on-year progress across the school so that the flying start that children get in the Foundation Stage is now being built upon very effectively. Consequently, standards at the end of Year 2 are on target to be above average. Year 6 pupils are making very good progress and are on track to attain their demanding targets. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully and identifies early those who need additional help. In 2007, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level (Level 5) in national assessments at the end of Year 6 was significantly above the national average. Pupils who find learning difficult make excellent progress against their individual targets. Overall, pupils make excellent progress over their time in school. The early morning reading club, supervised by volunteers, has made a significant contribution to the accelerated progress in reading. The school has recently extended this to mathematics.

Teachers are highly skilled practitioners who consistently manage to encourage good learning. The vibrancy of the curriculum comes from the fact that teachers plan together and share skills. It is the consistency of good learning which is key in explaining why teaching is excellent overall. Because they use assessment very effectively, teachers are flexible and take as their starting point where pupils actually are in their understanding. They are very clear what it is they want pupils to learn in a particular lesson or unit of work in terms of skills, concepts or knowledge and often give pupils the choice of the context within which to gain them. Consequently, pupils are engaged by the problem because they 'own' it. The staff foster pupils' independent skills very well across the school so that in lessons pupils work as hard as the teachers do. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work a great deal in order to explain, share, rehearse and evaluate their work and this develops the quality and originality of their thinking.

Excellent care and guidance systems are in place. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust, risk assessments carried out and the governors' premises committee carry out regular health and safety checks. Pupils get on well with each other, feel safe in school and are confident that they would approach an adult if troubled. Because what they do is interesting as a result of the rich curriculum, pupils enjoy school a great deal. This is reflected in their above average attendance. They are highly motivated and extremely well behaved. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community and the school prepares them extremely well for the next steps in their education. They have a particularly clear idea of what makes a healthy life-style and how to look after themselves. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Much of the personal and social education is taught through the topics being studied and, whilst effective overall, the school is aware that it does not ensure coverage of some concepts, for example relating to aspects of citizenship within a diverse society.

The school is highly effective because, when all the elements are put together, the impact of the school is so much greater than the sum of the individual parts. The school is very clear what it is about, the kind of education that it wants for the pupils and the skills and attitudes pupils will develop. There is unity of purpose and strong teamwork across the school that includes all adults, from the office staff outwards. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has been instrumental in developing an extremely effective staff team. He is generous about others' skills and modest of his own. He has a very clear understanding of the school's effectiveness and sensitive awareness to possible improvements. He has successfully established the school's professional culture. Teaching staff are self-critical and very reflective. They think very carefully about what they are doing, and why. Because there is a sustained focus on learning and achievement, teachers are very well prepared to adapt and change in order to improve. The school creates effectively an environment where pupils can flourish. The headteacher is supported extremely well by high quality leadership across the team and strategically by the governing body, so that the school's capacity to continue to develop and improve is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get a flying start and make very good progress. Almost all pupils reach a good level of attainment, working securely within the expectations for the end of the Foundation Stage and many go beyond these. This is achieved because there is a rich, creative, imaginative curriculum, excellent care and guidance and, above all, consistent high quality management of learning by the teacher and adults. Whilst energy, fun and excitement are key ingredients, these are balanced by careful reflection with the children to consider what they have learnt. Activities are balanced, both in the spread of experiences and between child-initiated and adult-directed activities. There are high expectations regarding children's independence, their ability to work together and to manage aspects of their learning. Talk, in all its forms, is also encouraged particularly well. As a result, children use terms such as 'subtract', 'first', and 'compare' with aplomb. Leadership of the provision is excellent. There is very good liaison with the local nursery and very strong teamwork with teachers in Years 1 and 2 leading to a smooth transition into and out of the Reception class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils are provided with suitable opportunities to develop their understanding of the issues relating to the rights and responsibilities of living together in the modern world.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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
How well 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

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Feering C of E VC Primary School, Feering C05 9QB

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school. I enjoyed my day with you very much. My particular thanks to those Year 6 and Year 5 pupils who gave up part of their lunchtime to speak with me. What you had to say was very helpful.

This is an outstanding school. You make excellent progress and reach high standards by the time you leave. Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their challenging targets. This is because the teachers are very skilled at helping you learn consistently well. The school also helps you develop as young people exceptionally well. It was good to hear that you feel safe in school but that you were also confident to approach an adult if you were troubled about something. You clearly have an extremely good idea of what makes a healthy life style and how to look after yourselves. I agree with you that you do many interesting things and this means that you enjoy school a great deal. I think the school prepares you extremely well for the next steps in your education.

One of the impressive things about the school is how very well everyone works together. The pupils are an important part of the team and you play your part very well in the way you contribute to the school and local community. In addition, the way you behave around the school and in lessons is impressive. The school also helps you develop the skills of working on your own without always relying on adults to help you and this will be very helpful in your secondary school. One of the reasons why the school is outstanding is that it thinks very carefully about what it does and how it might get even better. I have asked Mr Waters to work with the teachers to ensure that they are giving you the opportunity to explore issues relating to the rights and responsibilities of living together in the modern world.

Roderick Passant

Lead inspector