

George Fentham Endowed School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104094
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	323963
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann James
Headteacher	Julie Gaughan
Date of previous school inspection	9 May 2006
School address	Fentham Road Hampton in Arden Solihull B92 0AY
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors, pupils and representatives of external groups. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's data tracking, quality monitoring, improvement planning and other key documents. The outcomes from 70 parental questionnaires were evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Key Stage 1 boys' writing and Key Stage 2 girls' mathematics.
- The effectiveness of provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- How well the school is improving attendance.
- The effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion.

Information about the school

George Fentham Endowed School is supported by an Educational Foundation charity and was opened in the 18th century. It continues to draw its pupils from Hampton in Arden and the surrounding area. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school part-way through their primary education. It is an average sized primary school where most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Hardly any pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. These difficulties include speech and language needs, autism and dyslexia. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage education for children in Nursery and Reception. Extended provision is provided before, during and after the school day by 'The Base'. This facility is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately. Since the previous inspection there has been an almost total change of staff, with many leaving just before the present headteacher joined the school in 2006. There were also considerable personnel changes on the governing body at that time.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The high expectations and cheerful support of the exceptionally talented headteacher and deputy headteacher together with the dedicated staff and governors contribute to the rapid improvements this school is making. The vast majority of parents recognise the school's good quality and are pleased their children attend a happy and purposeful place of learning.

The school has a number of good and outstanding features.

- Standards are above average and rising. Good improvement has been made to boys' writing and girls' mathematics skills and knowledge.
- Pupils make good progress from the time they start in Nursery to the day they leave.
- Behaviour is first class.
- Pupils' awareness of how to keep fit and healthy is outstanding.
- Their understanding of how to keep safe, readiness for the next step in their education and contribution to the community are all good.
- Teaching is good throughout the school. Specialist teaching in subjects such as music and sports makes a strong contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is rich and relevant, with very effective provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Assessment has been improved well and is now a valuable tool for ensuring pupils' targets are precise and challenging.
- Arrangements for pupils' welfare and to safeguard them are good. The warm, welcoming ethos in school is valued by pupils and parents alike.
- All leaders and the governors are ambitious for the pupils' success. They work well together to bring strong improvement and have good potential to continue the school's rise.
- Children in Nursery and Reception make good progress because their learning is exciting and their welfare assured.

The adults in school are mindful of the things that remain for improvement.

- There are not enough direct links between pupils and people in other parts of Britain and in countries around the world to ensure community cohesion is fully promoted.
- While the school has identified the pupils with gifts and talents and has begun

to provide some valuable additional learning experiences, the programme is not fully tied into improvement planning for a creative curriculum and inspirational teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure the promotion of community cohesion is rooted firmly in pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of faiths, cultures and societies in different parts of Britain and overseas.

At present, pupils do not have enough opportunities to meet pupils and other people at schools outside the area. While there are some links with a school in Zambia, there are not enough opportunities for the pupils themselves to communicate with children in other parts of the world. Success in this improvement will be measured by pupils' greater knowledge and understanding of the lives and cultures of children elsewhere. A sensible timescale for putting such direct links in place would be the end of spring term 2010.

- Enhance the quality of provision for pupils with gifts and talents by incorporating it fully into improvement planning for the curriculum and teaching.

The school has a system of identifying pupils with gifts and talents and it has introduced a programme of additional activities for them. At present, planning of the curriculum and for lessons does not go far enough to identify how the provision for these pupils will be developed out of the regular programme of work for other pupils. Once the planning incorporates such detail, improvement will be measured by the degree to which the everyday provision for gifted and talented pupils ensures they work creatively, independently and with inspiration in their different themes. This improvement should be concluded by the end of summer term 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Standards have risen during the last three years, although the rate of increase has varied between subjects and the ages of the pupils. This year, the school has worked successfully to improve standards of boys' writing in Key Stage 1 and girls' mathematics in Key Stage 2, so that overall standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. Changed planning and grouping of pupils has had most impact, with additional support being provided for higher attaining pupils. This has ensured that all pupils, including those that find learning difficult make good progress in whole-class and group-based lessons, largely because the focus is on individual needs, the approach is brisk and pupils work productively and purposefully. Indeed, in some lessons, progress is outstanding because of pupils' lively interest in their learning due to the good variety of tasks and challenging stance taken by the teacher. Despite such improvements, lesson observations show there is not enough emphasis on

problem solving and investigation in mathematics, although the school has current plans to address this.

Pupils enjoy their learning immensely, which is a key reason for the outstanding behaviour in school. They are eager to discover more about all subjects, which assists their good progress in subjects such as art and design, physical education and information and communication technology. Pupils build the essential skills for the next steps in their education well. They are happy to cooperate, work independently when necessary and show initiative. They keep themselves safe by following the rules and advice given by staff, and are exceptionally well informed about health matters. There is a very good sense of identity amongst pupils as part of the school community and there are good opportunities for them to participate in village and regional events. The partnership with the parish church is noteworthy in this. The school has worked effectively with parents to improve attendance, in particular by targeting key groups who show persistent absence.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

The good progress made by pupils is a result of the good teaching and exciting curriculum. Some outstanding teaching was observed by inspectors who saw how well the pupils were motivated and how rapidly they progressed. Good features of the teaching observed during the inspection include the following.

- Thorough and precise lesson planning, ensuring work meets the needs of each ability group including those with learning difficulties.
- Pupils' increasing role in evaluating their own work and that of their friends.
- Lessons are fun and enjoyable, capturing the imagination of pupils. They say

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

their teachers help them when they have problems and parents report that teachers are approachable if they have questions about the work.

- A blend of effective class-based and withdrawal support for pupils in all ability groups ensuring equality of opportunity.
- A very rich and rewarding programme of out of school activities available to all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Parents and pupils judge care, guidance and support to be of top quality. Links with outside agencies are extremely effective in ensuring that all barriers to learning, such as irregular attendance or the mobility of some pupils, are overcome. Pupils respond very well to the advice and support provided and their achievement increases as a result.

The school acknowledges that teaching could be improved further and understands the need to reduce the number of occasions when teachers talk too long or give too many instructions to pupils rather than allowing them to make their own decisions and to work independently. This can reduce the potential for maximised achievement amongst gifted and talented pupils in particular.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

George Fentham is a school driven by everyone's will to promote equality, tackle discrimination and ensure that all pupils do well. Parents are keen to work with the school to help their children to take advantage of everything on offer and to work hard and play joyfully. Pupils strive hard and are very proud of their own and other pupils' achievements. The staff set pupils' best interests at the head of their agenda and are committed self-improvers. Governors are astute in their understanding of the school's work and continually probe to ensure decisions are the right ones to bring the identified improvements. Senior staff provide strong direction and make sure that pupils are safeguarded well.

At the heart of the school's recent improvements has been the headteacher. Quietly and calmly she has gathered support for her exceptionally well chosen aims for the school. These have been pursued unwaveringly and the degree of success has been marked. For example, behaviour has become first class because of the consistent focus across all staff on positive ways to motivate pupils. Similarly, the quality of teaching has been strengthened through the training and support provided by senior leaders. These improvements have progressed well because of the staff's willingness and desire to be influential in creating first-rate provision and achieving first-rate results for every child in school. The school has a good understanding of what still

needs to be done, for example, work to extend community cohesion more effectively into the wider international dimension. There also remains a well identified priority to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress because the provision for their learning and development is exciting and vibrant. At the start of Nursery, nearly every child has the expected levels of skills and knowledge for their age. Firm focus in the two Early Years Foundation Stage classes on their personal, social and emotional development as well as essential grounding in literacy and numeracy ensures that standards are above expectations by the end of Reception. Lesson observations show that children respond enthusiastically to the many different activities on offer and that they grow in confidence and self-esteem as they learn. Nursery children, for example, bubble with fun as they play outside with their friends, talk expressively with the adults guiding their learning or watch caterpillars in a jar wriggle and turn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader knows exactly where improvements can be made and effectively steers staff in their work. This ensures the children's welfare is secure. At present, the Nursery and Reception classrooms are at opposite ends of the school, which constrains the flow of children and staff between them. The outdoor space, particularly for Reception children, is not large. The school has plans to redesign the provision for Nursery and Reception to ensure a more unified provision focused on the total meeting of every child's individual needs.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Views of parents and carers

Parents are very happy with their choice of school for their children. They have overwhelmingly positive views of its work. The main strengths identified by parents are the effectiveness of school leadership, the approachable and caring staff and the facts that their children make good progress and enjoy school. Inspectors agree with these views. There were a handful of concerns raised that centred on difficulties in discussing and resolving anxieties with key leaders and insufficient challenge in the work provided, especially for more able children. Inspectors found no evidence to support the first of these views, although improvement in provision for gifted and talented pupils is included amongst the recommendations from this inspection.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils at George Fentham Endowed School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, they are asked to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 146 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	17	2	0

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- 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.
- Achievement: the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

7 May 2009

Dear Pupils



Inspection of George Fentham Endowed School, Hampton in Arden B92
OAY

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed finding out more about your school and you helped us to do this. We think you go to a good school and one that is improving all the time.

There is a long list of things your school does well. These are the most important.

- You reach above average standards and make good progress.
- You behave impeccably.¹
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy.
- Your lessons are interesting and enjoyable, and you are well taught.
- You know your targets, which are challenging, and your teachers are good at helping you improve your work.
- You learn a lot about each subject and you enjoy the very good programme of activities outside lessons.
- You are really well looked after.
- Children in Nursery and Reception have much fun in their learning and they do well in school.
- All the staff and governors work well to make sure you have a good education.
- Mrs Gaughan leads the school with great skill and knows how to make it even better.

In order to help your school become even better we have suggested two key things that your school could do better.

- Help you find out more about people in other parts of Britain and overseas.
- Make sure your gifts and talents are used fully in your learning.

You showed us just how willing you are to help your teachers. Now you can talk to them about people you know who live abroad and you can encourage your friends to build even more gifts and talents.

We hope you all do well in your education.

Yours faithfully

David Carrington
Lead inspector

¹ If you are not sure of this word, look it up in a dictionary or ask an adult to help you understand it.

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