

FKS Schools Ltd

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	881/6020
Unique Reference Number	115414
Inspection number	332447
Inspection dates	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for welfare, health and safety including the safeguarding of pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

FKS Schools Ltd is a small, non-selective, coeducational school whose aim is, 'To provide the highest quality education for all pupils in a happy, secure environment which, against a background of community spirit and sensitivity to the needs of others, encourages everyone to achieve their full potential'. It was established in 1957 by the current proprietor's mother and is located on two 'house' sites (Andrews and Edwards), in the rural village of Felsted in Essex. At the time of inspection, there were 159 pupils on roll. Children are admitted from the age of four and at the age of 11 transfer to local grammar, independent or state secondary schools. The pupils attend school for approximately six hours a day with younger children finishing ten minutes earlier. There are currently very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with speech and language or moderate learning and physical difficulties. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2006.

Evaluation of the school

FKS Schools Ltd provides a good standard of education for its pupils, both in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and throughout the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their behaviour. Courtesy and mutual respect are significant features of the school and its family ethos and calm atmosphere are reflected in the good procedures for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much, they make good progress and most parents hold the school in high regard. The school meets all the requirements for registration and has addressed successfully the regulations that were not met at the time of the last inspection.

Quality of education

The well-balanced curriculum is outstanding and has improved since the last inspection. There are now well-organised schemes of work and a curriculum overview that ensures a good balance and breadth of activities. The curriculum is

enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and enrichment activities including specialist teaching in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), French, music, dance and drama. Small classes and the 'setting' of pupils into groups of similar ability for basic skills lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 help to ensure that the curriculum is focused well on pupils' needs. Pupils enjoy a wide range of well attended extra-curricular activities, particularly sport. Participation in sporting competitions provides opportunities for the development of PE, complementing the good provision for sport within the curriculum. The school's provision for science and ICT has been developed well since the last inspection with an upgraded ICT suite at Andrews House and the provision of a practical science room at Edwards House. Pupils report that they particularly enjoy ICT and would appreciate more lessons. The good curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of their rights and responsibilities and understand how to stay healthy and safe. The curriculum is good in the EYFS.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good throughout the school, including in the EYFS. During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding, as it was at the last inspection. High expectations by teachers of pupils' work and behaviour, coupled with well planned and organised lessons, ensure that pupils make at least good, and in some cases outstanding progress. Pupils respond well to these expectations and their excellent attitudes and obvious pride are reflected in the purposeful atmosphere and very well presented work throughout the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Class teachers know their pupils very well. Consequently, pupils receive appropriately tailored support with their learning. Those who find learning difficult are particularly well supported in lessons and consequently make good progress. The school acknowledges the need to develop daily plans further so that the needs of all pupils are met even more effectively, especially those of the most able.

The recently developed assessment system, which has improved since the last inspection, provides useful information that helps teachers to evaluate and track the progress made by pupils. However, the use of this assessment information is not yet fully embedded across the whole school. Consequently, not all teaching ensures that activities meet the needs of every pupil in every case, particularly the most able. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, marking is not consistent in providing enough information to enable pupils to know how well they are doing and what they can do to further improve. As a result, pupils do not always have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. Homework is set regularly to consolidate pupils' basic skills and extend learning. A few parents reported that they would appreciate more information regarding the progress made by their children. Work seen in lessons and pupils' books confirms that pupils make good progress, particularly in basic skills, including in the EYFS.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and has improved further since the last inspection. Strong foundations are laid in the EYFS. Their personal development is a strength because teachers nurture the pupils' qualities through praise and high quality care and welfare. Pupils are proud to attend FKS and say they feel motivated and enjoy coming to school. As a result attendance is well above the national average. Most parents are supportive of the school, as one parent said, 'The care that the school provides for my child could not be better - it is a special place where every child is made to feel an individual'. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are encouraged to be responsible citizens. Consequently, their mutual respect, as well as their good social skills and manners are significant features of this well-ordered and caring environment, as is pupils' outstanding behaviour.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about the opportunities to contribute to both the school and wider community, undertaking jobs such as school monitors, ECO team members, and head pupils. A few of the older pupils report that they would like to have the opportunity to make an even greater contribution to the life of the school. Pupils regularly support local, national and international charities, such as Felsted Aid for Deprived Children (supporting the people affected by the Chernobyl Disaster), and more recently the street children of Mumbai, where their donations helped to establish craft workshops. Reflective moments in PSHE lessons and in assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to contemplate the needs of others. Pupils have a good understanding of different lifestyles and cultures, as seen in their knowledge and understanding of different countries, cultures and faiths, and festivals such as Sukkot, Easter, Christmas and Diwali. Many spoke enthusiastically about their visit to a Hindu temple in Neasden, to further their understanding of different faiths.

The school provides opportunities to extend pupils' knowledge of public services and institutions through a good range of cross-curricular projects enhanced by visits to museums, exhibitions, historic buildings and galleries. The highlight was a special visit to the Houses of Parliament. Older pupils, many of whom sit external examinations, and their parents, receive helpful guidance which, along with their good basic skills, prepares them well for moving to the next stage of their education and, in the longer term, for adulthood and their general economic well-being.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

The school makes good provision for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of all of the pupils, including in the EYFS, as was found at the last inspection. Procedures to ensure their safety are met and all the required policies are in place. Staff supervise the pupils vigilantly during lessons and when playing outside. All staff are first aid and fire safety trained and arrangements in case of fire and other emergencies are good. The school pays special attention to the importance of risk assessments, which ensure that pupils feel safe around school. It also acknowledges the need to provide further opportunities for staff training in child protection and has made plans for this to happen in the very near future. The school encourages pupils to stay healthy, for

example by regular exercise and a sensible diet, particularly through the good PE, PSHE and science curriculum. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002. All of the regulations in respect of the checks it makes on prospective employees with regard to their identity and suitability to work with children, and keeping a single central register of these are met.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. As a result of the good progress children make from their starting points on entry to school, many of them reach standards that are above the levels expected by the end of the EYFS. The curriculum is well planned and exceptionally well organised and teaching is at least good and is sometimes outstanding. Children therefore achieve well across all areas of learning, particularly in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and especially in reading and writing. There are many strengths in EYFS. Highly experienced staff ensure that EYFS provision is tailored to the individual needs of each child in the exceptionally small classes. Parents rightly feel that their children settle quickly into the Reception class; this is because the staff are caring and have established clear routines and expectations. As a result, children learn to behave well and ensure others' and their own safety.

The personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS is outstanding and contributes effectively to good relationships and children's self-confidence as learners. There is a good range of activities directed by adults, as well as those initiated by the children themselves. Children collaborate successfully in these activities and show their maturity in their ability to share and take turns. Staff regularly assess children's progress and these are used to plan the next steps in their learning. Leadership and management are good. However, full use of the Foundation Stage assessment profile information is yet to be made to maintain a precise overview of children's progress. The school has plans to improve outdoor learning facilities and equipment so that outdoor learning complements the current good range of indoor activities available.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- improvement of the quality of daily planning so that activities ensure that the needs of all, including the most able, are fully met
- improvement of the quality and consistency of marking so that children know and understand where they are in their learning and how to improve their work further
- more rigorous analysis of the information from assessments to improve the quality of the provision further in order to enable pupils to progress at an even faster rate.

EYFS

- improvement of the quality of the outdoor area so that it complements the good provision of the indoor learning areas.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils	✓			
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?		✓		
How well do children achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage relative to their starting points and capabilities?		✓		
How good are the personal development and well-being of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	✓			
What is the quality of welfare, health and safety of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?		✓		
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?		✓		
What is the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage including, where relevant, the quality of childcare?		✓		

School details

Name of school	FKS Schools Ltd		
DCSF number	881/6020		
Unique reference number	115414		
Type of school	Primary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1957		
Age range of pupils	4–11 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 80	Girls: 79	Total: 159
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,219 - £6864		
Address of school	FKS Schools Braintree Road Felsted Essex CM6 3DS		
Telephone number	01371 820638		
Fax number	01371 821901		
Email address	admin@fksschools.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Woods		
Proprietor	Miss Valerie Lipman		
Reporting inspector	Mrs Wendy Forbes		
Date of inspection	21 January 2009		