

Featherby Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 118421 |
| Local Authority | Medway |
| Inspection number | 358344 |
| Inspection dates | 20–21 September 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | John Paull |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Infant |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–7 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 327 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Steve Fautley |
| Headteacher | Jane Thompson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 September 2010 |
| School address | Allington Road Gillingham ME8 6PD |
| Telephone number | 01634 231072 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed the school at work and visited 14 lessons involving 12 different teachers. Views expressed in 56 parental questionnaires were taken into account, as were those in staff questionnaires. Meetings also took place between inspectors and staff, the governing body, parents and carers, and pupils. Documents related to the safeguarding of pupils, future planning, pupils' current work, and the assessment and tracking of their progress were scrutinised.

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

- Whether steady improvements in pupils' attainment are sustainable.
- The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, especially of arrangements for care, guidance and support of pupils and how these aspects are related to outcomes.
- How well governors and senior leaders have responded to the previous inspection report.
- Senior leaders' and the staff's evaluations of the school's involvement in building community cohesion.

Information about the school

Featherby Infant and Nursery School is much larger than the average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national figure, although it is rising steadily. Only very few pupils are at early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils are identified with moderate learning and/or speech and language difficulties. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average.

The Sunshine Featherby Pre-School and Out of School Club operates on the site. This provision is privately managed and run, and is subject to a separate inspection and report.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good school has improved well since its previous inspection. One parent wrote, 'Feartherby Infants and Nursery is a wonderful school. It is well run. The children receive a good education in a very caring environment.' This opinion is typical of the vast majority that were received and the judgements of the inspection team support it. The school's senior leaders, staff and governors use accurate self-evaluations of their performance to establish what should be improved and act on the findings accordingly. They completely '...understand parents' need for contact', was the comment of another parent. The staff use parents' and carers' views as part of the process of identifying pupils' needs effectively, whatever these needs might be. Partly in response to these views, for example, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen and is currently above average. Pupils' learning and progress are good. An initiative known as 'reading recovery' has been particularly effective in raising the attainment of girls and boys, reflecting good procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity. Other outcomes, including pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and those related to pupils' feelings of well-being, are consistently good. Successful improvement is also evident in ensuring the availability of all areas of learning outdoors for children of Reception age. Such developments point to a good capacity for continuing improvement.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding, mainly because partnerships with parents and carers and with agencies outside the school are remarkably strong. The effect of this is most evident in the support that pupils and families in any type of social distress receive. This is another reason why achievement is good, as barriers to learning are removed for pupils whose progress might otherwise be badly slowed or even prevented. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are good, although the consistency of these aspects is greater in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is where the responses to fluctuations in children's progress, picked up from ongoing assessment or formal data, are reflected more quickly in what is taught.

All staff, including senior and subject leaders, led very effectively by the headteacher, accept responsibility for different aspects of the school's work and manage them effectively. Safeguarding, including the vetting of staff and child protection, are taken seriously with statutory requirements fully in place. Governors know the school well and are closely involved in making and guiding decisions. The headteacher and governors have audited the school's involvement in building community cohesion and have correctly identified that what the school does locally is very strong, although national and global dimensions are less developed.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that information about assessments of pupils' progress and how individuals learn are used as effectively as possible to adapt teaching and the curriculum, by
 - making sure that all staff are fully aware of all available information about pupils' progress
 - ensuring that the response to such information is as quick and thorough as possible.
- Exploring and introducing ways of building the national and global elements of community cohesion

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment has improved well since the school's 2008 inspection. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate good understanding of number. They demonstrated this clearly in a lesson when they practised number bonds, adding and subtracting successfully up to 20. More able pupils went further and were often very quick in their responses. Pupils also know many important properties to help them identify shapes. They read and write effectively and enjoy their achievements. These are seen in work on display and in their books, which reflect the assessments of their learning. In 2009, when results for reading, writing and mathematics were combined, the outcome was significantly above average. In 2010, the proportion of pupils whose assessments in reading, writing and mathematics match expected levels for their age increased even further. The school's own records for tracking progress also indicate that learning is good and builds effectively through the school. This is evident for pupils of different ethnicity or with a range of social and other needs. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils acquired knowledge of new letter sounds effectively. Support for pupils with special educational needs enabled them to build on their current understanding and skills. Much good artwork is emerging, as seen in displays that are on view in the building, even near the start of a new school year. Pupils in the choir also sang with great pleasure and accuracy during a lunchtime meeting.

Other outcomes are also good. Pupils state that they feel safe and are cared for and their behaviour is good in lessons, on the playground and around the building. They know right from wrong and demonstrate this in helpful and polite actions. They listen attentively in assemblies and adopt reverent and serious attitudes when appropriate. A very enthusiastic group, known as 'Peacemakers', has received training to help in mediating any disputes that might arise between pupils. Much evidence of its effectiveness is evident, making a very strong contribution to the school as a cohesive community. Pupils are also very willing to raise money for charities, although their direct knowledge and involvement with children in communities further afield is not as apparent. Pupils know much about healthy foods and nearly all of them enjoy exercise and physical education, reflecting the award of a Healthy School certificate. The acquisition of skills that support future well-being is good, reflecting pupils' strengths in

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sociability, literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. Attendance is currently average, although improving steadily.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

| | |
|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good. Teachers manage pupils well and most lessons proceed with little interruption. Time during which pupils concentrate on activities and learning is therefore invariably used well, contributing to their good behaviour and progress. Short sessions at the end of lessons are used well to assess what pupils have learnt and thereby to fill gaps in learning and consolidate progress. However, this is not always balanced by similar uses of good quality ongoing assessment at other stages in lessons. Teachers use a lot of information on pupils' prior learning, available in assessment records, to adapt both teaching and curricular content alike. On occasions, however, weaker teaching occurs when work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' different learning needs.

Teachers and teaching assistants alike are very aware of pupils who require guidance and extra reassurance to support their concentration and enjoyment. This is provided to

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

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a very high level and has a profound effect in keeping such pupils focused on their learning and progress. Advice and expertise from agencies beyond the school are sought quickly and highly conscientiously when the need arises. The special needs coordinator works closely with staff and parents and carers with considerable skill. The staff act upon her information very effectively and, as a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. A recently appointed home/school liaison worker operates with similar effect and parents and carers who have worked with her are highly complimentary about the impact on their children's behaviour and work in school.

The curriculum contains all the subjects that it should and links and partnerships are used very well to enhance already strong personal, social and health education. Senior and subject leaders and other staff have been very active in using initiatives in mathematics and reading, especially to ensure that pupils attain at least average standards by the end of Year 2, despite often low starting points. The recent introduction of 'reading recovery' is a telling example. Its impact has spread far beyond just those pupils who were originally identified for inclusion in the programme.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: 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?

The headteacher and senior staff use information well to address aspects of provision that require improvement. They are also alert to national or local initiatives and are very willing to introduce those that will support pupils' needs effectively, adapting teaching methods and the curriculum. The staff demonstrate willingness to follow their lead and manage effectively aspects and subjects for which they are responsible. Governors keep in close contact with the school and know its strengths and areas for improvement well, adopting a supportive and yet questioning approach. Parents and carers are extensively involved in the work of the school through a variety of means. These include coffee mornings, regular meetings to explain changes in what is taught, and how to help their children learn at home. Partnerships with other schools, agencies and experts are also managed and used very effectively. The management of procedures to ensure pupils are safeguarded is good, including robust procedures for first aid and ensuring race equality. Careful steps are taken to ensure that the needs of pupils or families in disadvantaged circumstances are addressed as effectively as possible, so anything that might discriminate against these pupils' progress is tackled. This includes pupils of all

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backgrounds and ethnicity. This effective leadership and management results in outcomes that produce good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Much emphasis is evident in establishing routines to settle children quickly when they first arrive in the Nursery. Success is built on good initial contact with families, including home visits, so children and their parents and carers have already met some of the adults whom they will meet in school. These visits also provide opportunities to swap information, so individual needs are known and children can make progress quickly as soon as they begin school. Assessments soon after children enter indicate that attainment on entry is often below age-related expectations in some important areas, such as language development and communication. Records are kept meticulously in Nursery and Reception classes. Information about how children respond to activities across different areas of learning is gathered formally and informally. This indicates that learning and development are good and that children are increasingly reaching expected levels in the different areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Independence and self-reliance are successfully encouraged and children thrive socially and across the areas of learning. Good leadership is ensuring that provision is of good quality and in some respects outstanding. For example, resources are tailored very effectively to meet individual requirements. The adults' questioning of children is often highly skilled, helping each child to understand at exactly the correct level for their stage of development. This was seen in a Reception class when questioning to a group of

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children ensured that each individual understood how the numeral '3' described the number of shapes in their hands. Recent developments to the outside area in the Reception have enabled further refinements in planning and staff are very aware of how this might be used to raise learning and development to an outstanding level in the near future.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| 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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' views expressed in questionnaires, letters and face-to-face conversations with an inspector were remarkably positive. Many complimentary comments were received, especially about how open and communicative the headteacher and staff are. Only very few negative responses emerged. Four parents suggested that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. However, during this inspection inspectors saw very little poor behaviour and this was soon resolved. Pupils who were asked expressed the view that their friends behave well and that they are proud of each other's accomplishments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Featherby Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 33 | 59 | 23 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 36 | 64 | 20 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 27 | 48 | 27 | 48 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 26 | 46 | 28 | 50 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 34 | 61 | 20 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 28 | 50 | 24 | 43 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 37 | 66 | 19 | 34 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 27 | 48 | 22 | 39 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 27 | 48 | 27 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 21 | 38 | 28 | 50 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 21 | 38 | 32 | 57 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 33 | 59 | 23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 33 | 59 | 23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| 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. |

Overall effectiveness of schools

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 58 | 36 | 4 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 43 | 40 | 9 |
| Secondary schools | 10 | 35 | 42 | 13 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 39 | 45 | 3 |
| Special schools | 33 | 42 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 18 | 40 | 29 | 12 |
| All schools | 11 | 42 | 38 | 9 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| 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. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| 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. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 September 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Featherby Infant and Nursery School, Gillingham, ME8 6PD

Thank you for being so helpful and willing to talk to the other inspectors and me when we came to your school. You helped a huge amount to make the two days go well. We all enjoyed speaking to you and visiting your lessons. It is great that so many of you told us that you like school a lot. All of the children to whom we spoke thought that Featherby Infant is a good school and we agree with them.

You will see some of the main things that we found out in this list:

- Your teachers teach you well, so you do well in your lessons and make good progress.
- All the adults in school care for you very well indeed and the staff and your parents and carers work together very closely to make sure that everything works well for you.
- You behave well.
- You know a lot about how to eat healthily and you feel safe at school.
- You show strong willingness to do jobs that help your teachers to run the school. Having Peacemakers in school is a very good idea and they do their job extremely well.
- The staff and the governing body have good ideas to make your school even better.

Here are two things to help improve your school further:

- We would like the staff to use all the things they know about your progress to plan your work even better.
- We would like all of you to have more opportunities to hear about people up and down the country and overseas, and to learn even more about their lives.

You can all help, too, by continuing to work hard. We hope that you will always enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull

Lead inspector

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