

Felton Church of England First School

Mouldshaugh Lane, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE65 9PY

Inspection dates 6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' progress is good and improving because of good quality teaching. Attainment in reading and writing is above expectations by Year 4, although in mathematics it is not as strong.
- Learning in lessons is good. Teachers plan imaginative activities that interest pupils and, therefore, pupils are exceptionally well motivated.
- Effective tracking of progress is used well by leaders to ensure that those pupils requiring support receive help that is precisely tailored to their needs. As a result, all pupils achieve well.
- Most parents agree that the 'two heads are better than one' as each brings different strengths to the school. They have worked well together to bring about continued improvements in teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong due to the stimulating curriculum pupils experience and enjoy.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They play well together as one big family. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and act responsibly around school. They know that the adults in the school are approachable and will help them with any problems they may have. Parents support this view.
- Governors make an important contribution to school improvement through their support and monitoring.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Too few more-able pupils attain at higher levels because not all lessons have the pace and rigour to meet their learning needs.
- The quality of marking and guidance on how to improve is not consistently strong across all areas of the curriculum.
- Fewer pupils achieve as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed six lessons and observed teaching assistants supporting individual pupils. Two lessons were joint observations with one of the headteachers. Inspectors carried out a scrutiny of pupils' books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and explored pupils' views about their enjoyment of reading. An inspector observed the breakfast club in action. Pupils' views were sought during playtime and in a meeting of the school council.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the day and in the coffee afternoon in the community room. They took account of 27 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View) and correspondence from parents. They examined the outcomes from the most recent school parental survey, as well as nine staff questionnaires.
- The lead inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body, a foundation governor and a senior local authority representative.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteachers and staff about performance management and training provided. They discussed the development of literacy, mathematics, together with provision for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, and the information provided on the school web site.

Inspection team

Janet Greaves, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pauline Piddington

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average First Church of England School with pupils aged three to nine years old.
- There are two headteachers each of whom have a part-time contract. Since the last inspection, there have been many staff changes.
- All pupils are White British.
- There are currently equal proportions of boys and girls, although the proportions are very different in each of the three classes or learning zones.
- There is a very small proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is a greater than average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action, but a smaller than average proportion are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school provides a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - increasing the pace and rigour in lessons to meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able
 - improving the quality of mathematics teaching by providing training for all staff so that they are better able to help pupils make more rapid progress and attain more highly in the subject
 - ensuring that marking is of a consistently high quality in all pupils' books across the curriculum, reflecting the best examples of the quality of marking and guidance found in English
 - making mathematics and marking the foci for improvement and monitoring by leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. They start school with skills that are broadly in line with age-related expectations and make good progress. Good teaching allows them to make a good start in recognising sounds and the letters they represent, and in their early reading development.
- This programme of teaching letters and sounds continues into Key Stage 1 where pupils attain above the national average in their phonics screening test in Year 1 and also in reading at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils throughout the school read fluently and with comprehension. They talk about their enjoyment of reading with enthusiasm. Many have favourite authors.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above average in reading and writing due to the concerted efforts to improve the quality of teaching by providing relevant training and careful tracking of pupils' progress. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average and improving.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, they have reached standards that are above expectations in reading and writing and as expected in mathematics.
- The rate of pupils' progress has increased over time and is now good overall with some pupils making outstanding progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium also make good progress. The gap between the attainment of those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in the school is closing. Outcomes from statutory assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2012 showed that the proportion of these pupils reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was higher than similar pupils nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that currently these pupils are well supported so that any gaps in learning are still narrowing securely.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Nursery-aged children make a good start to their school life where they become confident happy learners who play well together. The morning begins well with singing as they identify their own names to self-register. They have opportunities to plan their own learning throughout the day.
- The Explorers 1 learning area (Early Years Foundation Stage Unit) provides opportunities for teacher-led activities, such as counting up to 20 and learning number bonds. This dovetails well with the activities that children choose for themselves, such as the shop where they can use this knowledge to calculate costs when buying and selling items.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong throughout the school because it is implicit in all learning. Children in Explorers 1, following the whole-school Native American topic, were building a Totem Pole and were encouraged to share and be kind towards one another. The theme also developed well their speaking and listening skills during an animal role play activity. The use of questioning helps children to think about their learning, although at times the more able children do not have enough time to develop their ideas fully.
- The programme to teach letters and the sounds they represent is effective and pupils make a good start to their early reading skills. In an Explorers 2 (Years 1 and 2 pupils) lesson, pupils were interested and well motivated because the teacher made learning active and enjoyable. They played a game, 'What's the word, Mr Wolf?' with pupils being encouraged to recognise sounds and letters as well as identifying syllables.
- Pupils have opportunities to follow their own interests within the whole-school themes taught. They enjoy activities and many parents say that their children often choose to continue their

learning at home. Some parents, however, do not think the homework set is always appropriate and linked to the needs of their children.

- In the Adventurers class, (Years 3 and 4) pupils have opportunities to write in a range of styles. Some pupils recount a story about Native Americans, some use symbols and diagrams to write messages and others create power point presentations from their research.
- The use of questioning is effective in checking on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers are less effective in using questioning to extend pupils' thinking, particularly that of the most able pupils.
- The Native American theme has also been adopted well by the cook who provided a Wild West Day menu, including vegetarian bangers, potato wedges, and barbeque beans followed by Mississippi Mud Pie. Pupils dressed up as Native Americans and had great fun making a giant totem pole in the hall.
- Strengths in teaching are in the excellent relationships between the adults and pupils and the effective deployment of the teaching assistants. In the lessons that most capture pupils' interest, teaching assistants are actively involved in the lesson, as well as effectively meeting the needs of all pupils. This provides pupils with more opportunity to make progress in their learning.
- Lessons are generally well planned to meet the needs of pupils, although not all lessons are taught with the pace and rigour that enables pupils to make the best possible progress, particularly those who are more able.
- The quality of teaching in literacy is stronger than that in mathematics, which reflects the recent focus upon developing reading and writing skills. The school has rightly identified mathematics as an area for further development. Teachers need to give pupils more opportunities to practise and develop their calculation skills within problem-solving tasks and mathematical investigations.
- Pupils know their targets and describe their next steps in learning. Marking is done regularly and is often used well to inform pupils about how successful they have been and how to improve their work. However, this is inconsistent across the school and between subjects. There is some excellent marking, particularly in literacy books, to help pupils to progress further but this is not evident across all areas of the curriculum.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils enjoy school life, which was described by members of the school council as 'the best in the world'.
- Pupils play well together as one big happy family. They are extremely well mannered and polite. They say that the adults in the school are approachable and will always help them with any problems. Poor behaviour is rare but it is well managed when it occurs. Pupils describe feeling 'very, very' safe at this welcoming, caring school. Their above average attendance reflects their enjoyment of and confidence in the school.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They describe fire safety and younger children appreciate the advice about how to stay safe on their bikes and in the school grounds. Both pupils and parents have valued the internet safety advice given to them. Pupils enjoy the outdoor environment and play sensibly. The well-established routines are followed by all pupils.
- In lessons, they are very keen to learn and work purposefully, especially in those that interest them and extend their skills.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. They are reflective, considerate and very clear about their understanding of what constitutes responsible behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led effectively by two part-time headteachers. Their inspirational leadership has brought many improvements to the school, despite having many staff changes since the last

inspection in 2007. They bring different skills and experiences to the school and work together extremely well. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development through their accurate view of the school's current performance, leading to appropriate and relevant priorities for improvement.

- The whole staff team work together to improve the school, for example, in the review of the provision for those pupils with special educational needs and in the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. Everyone is committed to provide the best for the pupils in their care. Parents appreciate the staff's dedication to their children.
- There is an effective tracking system that enables leaders to identify quickly any potential underachievement and to provide additional support when needed. The headteachers both provide effective leadership of teaching, which continues to improve.
- They have a thorough knowledge of the quality of teaching and how it helps pupils to make good and more recently, some to make outstanding progress. They provide clear guidance to improve the quality of teaching, such as the implementation of the letters and sounds programme to support early reading development. They are now focussing upon improving the quality of the teaching of mathematics.
- There are many opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the stimulating curriculum, particularly in Religious Education. The school promotes equality of opportunity well.
- The school's leaders ensure that the school's mission statement, Loving, Learning, Living,' permeates all aspects of the school's work and is firmly underpinned by strong Christian values.
- The school works well in partnership with the local authority that provides light touch but effective support and monitoring.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and how it can improve further. Governors have taken decisive action about the budget and how to deploy staff in this small school. They are well supported by the Felton School Friends Association. Governors regularly visit the school and feedback to other governors.
 - The governing body has robust procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of the joint headteacher role. Governors monitor performance management and ensure that relevant training for staff and governors occur. They have used the small amount of pupil premium funding to provide additional teaching assistants for individual and small group support and to part fund the breakfast club in order to help to close the gap in attainment between those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is well informed and provides clear leadership. He is also, in his role as the parish vicar, fully involved in the life of the school, for example, by leading assemblies and Collective Acts of Worship, which are thoroughly enjoyed by all pupils.
 - Governors ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding. They have also promoted the improvements in pupils' attendance and punctuality.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122273
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	412705

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Simon White
Headteacher	Nichola Brannen and Suzanne Connolly
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2007
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