

Freemans Endowed Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121999
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	314183
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Mandeville
Headteacher	Simon Smith
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2004
School address	Westfield Road Wellingborough NN8 3HD
Telephone number	01933 274870
Fax number	01933 274873

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is similar to the picture found nationally. The majority of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and none of the pupils are at an early stage of speaking English.

The school has gained the Silver Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark, Bronze Active Young Citizen Award and a Bronze Race Equality Award.

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 where pupils make excellent progress in their academic and personal development. There is a happy and vibrant learning environment, which is supported by an ethos of Christian love and respect. Pupils and parents hold the school in the highest regard. Many parents praised 'this inspirational school, the dedicated teachers, excellent leadership and polite, happy and friendly pupils'.

The school's considerable success is due to a number of influential factors, not least outstanding leadership and teaching, excellent care and guidance and a rich curriculum. Pupils start at the school with attainment levels that are broadly average and leave at the end of Year 6 with exceptionally high standards especially in English, where over three quarters of the pupils attain the highest Level 5. Standards in mathematics are above average and pupils achieve well, but senior leaders are not complacent and are currently implementing strategies to ensure pupils achieve exceptionally high standards in mathematics as well as in English and science.

Teaching is excellent as it is demanding and challenging and keeps pupils on their toes. Pupils hang on teachers' every word because of considerable mutual trust and respect. A wealth of high quality learning opportunities, including music and sport, are on offer both within and outside the school day. It is no surprise that attendance is exceptionally high and pupils cannot wait for the school day to begin. Many pupils arrive before eight o'clock to participate in basketball lessons and other sporting activities. The support for pupils and the academic guidance they receive is impressive, as is the pupils' knowledge of their own learning and personal targets and what they need to do to be even better, although teachers' marking is much better in English than in mathematics and pupils have more opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects.

A significant strength of the school is the excellent personal development of the pupils. Their behaviour is outstanding, they show an infectious enthusiasm for learning and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and the wider community. They are exceptionally well aware of the importance of keeping healthy and safe and they show great initiative and enterprise in the many fundraising activities they organise and run for themselves. They aspire and strive to be valued trustees of the school, maturely assisting with monitoring discipline at break times and running the very active school council. Their activities not only show their great concern for others but also enable them to become well-rounded citizens and to develop qualities and skills that equip them outstandingly well for their future lives.

All staff work extremely well together and share the desire to provide the best that they can for the pupils. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, together with the leadership team, is highly effective at monitoring teaching and the school's performance, in accurately identifying strengths and areas for development and in robustly tackling and improving any weaknesses. The school's track record of improvement is outstanding as is its capacity to move onwards and upwards. This highly successful school is not content to rest on its laurels but sets itself increasingly challenging targets to do even better.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, by improving marking and by increased use of numeracy skills in all subjects so that pupils attain the same exceptionally high standards as they do in English and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils start at the school with broadly average standards. Test and assessment data indicate that by the time pupils leave school, standards are consistently very high, particularly in English and science. Standards are above the expected levels in music. Much of this is due to the outstanding and exciting teaching and the manner in which the inspirational leadership and management of the school tackle the causes of any dips in performance when they occur. Mathematics standards at the higher level dipped in 2007. A range of carefully planned initiatives was put in place and in 2008 and 2009 standards appear set to rise again. All pupils, irrespective of gender, ability or ethnicity make outstanding progress. The school sets very challenging targets and the commitment shown by all staff and pupils to ensure they are reached, and often exceeded, is a winning combination that lies at the heart of why the school is so successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are terrific ambassadors for the school. Their love of school, high levels of self-motivation and an overriding determination to do well are all tangible and reflected in their excellent attendance and outstanding work ethic. Pupils are very reflective, show a genuine concern and care for others, demonstrate high levels of maturity and have an excellent knowledge and respect of cultures and beliefs beyond their own. Pupils' awareness of how to be healthy and keep safe is outstanding. In conjunction with the local police, older pupils monitored the speed of vehicles outside the school as they felt cars were going dangerously fast. Pupils diligently carry out a plethora of tasks and take on responsibilities around the school; they run the library and the school council themselves. They make decisions about which charities to support and competently organise fundraising events such as the summer sale and are currently raising all pupils' awareness of environmental issues via the Eco council. Pupils leave school with outstanding academic skills and personal qualities in preparation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The way teachers plan pupils' work is meticulous and ensures that tasks set are very challenging and closely matched to pupils' individual abilities. Lessons move at a fast pace and incisive questions are used to keep pupils engaged and motivated. Teachers succeed in making learning fun and enjoyable. They often use their high levels of subject knowledge to bring learning springing to life. Excellent use is made of computers and interactive whiteboards to bring interest to pupils' learning. Specialist high calibre music teaching results in high standards and achievement. Assessment is excellent and based on thorough monitoring of pupils' progress and on setting challenging targets. The marking of pupils' English work is outstanding as it gives excellent and detailed advice and guidance to pupils who respond positively. However this is not the case in mathematics where the quality of marking varies throughout the school and does not always tell pupils clearly how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Literacy and scientific skills are developed very well and close links between subjects have been established, although this is underdeveloped in the case of mathematics. Very good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and higher attaining pupils. Enrichment activities are stunningly good. The wide range of after school clubs includes choir, tag rugby, cricket, gardening, sewing, netball and chess. Year 4 and Year 6 enjoy residential visits and the last one to Shropshire was described as being 'wicked' by the pupils. There are regular visits to places of historical, cultural or political interest. The school's vision for a curriculum based around excellence and enjoyment is fully realised as demonstrated in a fantastic and uplifting gospel singing session where Year 5 pupils sang with passion, harmony and tremendous pleasure.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The headteacher and leadership team recognise and celebrate the individuality of all pupils, and staff know pupils' academic and social needs very well. Rigorous procedures are in place for child protection, risk assessment and health and safety. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure pupils receive support when it is needed. Strong and much improved links with feeder schools ensure smooth transition as well as enabling pupils to settle quickly and confidently. Outstanding procedures for tracking pupils' academic development are enhanced significantly by the fact that pupils have a very good knowledge of their own targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's leadership is inspirational and innovative. He ensures that the school provides an exciting range of learning opportunities that motivate and challenge pupils. Together, the headteacher and the leadership team form an impressive partnership where their distinct areas of expertise combine seamlessly to make the school outstanding. There is a tremendous team spirit in school and all staff are committed and succeed in providing the best for all pupils. Governors are great supporters of the school and play an increasingly effective role in questioning, challenging and monitoring the school's performance. Virtually all parents are extremely happy with the school. One summing up the views of many writes, 'I wish all schools were like this one. The school's values: Be kind, Be Honest and Forgive provide an excellent foundation for the children.'

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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 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	1
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	2
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

15 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freemans Endowed C of E Junior School, Wellingborough, NN8 3HD

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am writing to let you know what we found out. Before I do, I would like to thank you for the exceptionally warm welcome you gave us. You are all extremely polite and friendly and are great ambassadors for the school. It was particularly kind of Year 6 to be so courteous and helpful towards us especially as they were in the middle of their SATs. We also particularly enjoyed Year 5's amazing gospel singing lesson.

Your school has so many great features that it is actually an outstanding school! The excellent teachers make learning fun and enjoyable and you reach high standards in your work. You have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and it was brilliant to see so many of you enjoying the basketball and netball clubs. You are really well cared for at school and you receive excellent support in your learning and in your personal development. Another strength is the impressive way in which the headteacher leads the school and makes sure it is a welcoming, happy and successful community. You, yourselves are another huge strength with your excellent behaviour, your hard work, and your contribution to school life and in the mature way in which you care for each other.

The headteacher and the leadership team have many excellent ideas to make the school even better. We agree with their plans and also feel it would be helpful if teachers marked your mathematics books as well as they do your English books. It would also be good if staff could give you more opportunities to use your numeracy skills in other subjects. The headteacher and all the staff want the school to continue to improve. Having met you I am sure you will play your part as well by continuing to work hard and by keeping up your excellent standards of behaviour.

On behalf of the other inspectors, I wish you every success in the future. It was a real pleasure and privilege to meet you all. Yours sincerely

Joyce Cox Lead inspector