

Inspection of George Fentham Endowed School

Fentham Road, Hampton-in-Arden, Solihull, West Midlands B92 0AY

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since April 2014.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very proud of their school. They are happy and enjoy their learning. Many pupils speak positively about the subjects they study. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils demonstrate the school's core values, 'ready respectful and safe'. Pupils feel safe and know there are numerous adults they can go to if they feel worried.

The school teaches character development explicitly from Nursery onwards. It develops throughout pupils' time in school. Pupils respect differences locally and in the wider world. They celebrate diversity through the role models they study, for example, during Black History Month.

The school is very ambitious for all pupils to do well, including those who face challenges. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising. Reading is prioritised from the moment children join nursery. They are very well prepared to start in Reception.

Pupils thrive on taking responsibilities, such as door monitors supporting others at breaktimes. They appreciate trips to support their learning, for example Coventry cathedral to see the impact of the bombing of the Second World War. They appreciate the many clubs and activities, including 'jet dance' and a visit to the theatre to see the ballet.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school has designed a curriculum tailored very well to their needs. Leaders are very highly ambitious for pupils to do well. Plans are sequenced to allow pupils to build on prior learning. Children in early years are exposed to challenging vocabulary, for example, when are learning about kings, queens and castles. This prepares them very well for their future studies of monarchs, such as Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria. In art, the curriculum content follows a systematic progression, to enable pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills. Teachers have the necessary knowledge they need to teach the full range of subjects.

Adults teach the phonics programme consistently well. Children get off to a very rapid start when reading in Nursery, so they are very well prepared by the time they enter Reception. The school provides effective support for those not meeting the phonics standard in Years 1 and 2, or who are not yet fully secure. This means pupils are developing the confidence and knowledge they need to be fluent readers.

Pupils' attainment in mathematics is not yet as strong as in reading and writing. This is improving following the introduction of a revised approach, which has helped leaders devise a curriculum which is coherently planned.

Teachers check pupils' understanding through suitable targeted questioning and ongoing checking of work. However, on occasion, pupils struggle to recall information previously taught, and teachers do not pick up on their misconceptions and mistakes quickly enough before moving on with the learning.

The school has very effective systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which start right away in early years. These pupils are well integrated into lessons. Effective additional support helps them to catch up with learning. Suitable adaptations to the curriculum enable them to achieve the same learning objectives as the rest of the class, including in the early years.

The school has created a very positive and purposeful environment in lessons, including in early years, where pupils are extremely clear about the high expectations for behaviour. Pupils know that adults encourage them to develop their independence. This was apparent in lessons, including in the early years. Attendance is high and improving. The school is relentless in following up on any absence to ensure pupils are in school regularly.

The school is rightly proud of how it promotes pupils' personal development exceptionally well. It successfully ensures that pupils are ready for learning, respect others and are safe. This culture is evident throughout the school, starting from Nursery. Pupils have a very strong appreciation of fundamental British values. They demonstrate this in their very positive relationships with each other.

Pupils readily take on additional roles, such as being a librarian and being part of the eco-group, school or online safety councils. Pupils enjoy a wide range of activities, including football, choir and reading clubs. Take up of clubs is especially high for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Pupils were particularly appreciative of a trip linked to their study of the Stone Age, which brought their learning to life. Pupils have a very good knowledge of people from other faiths and different backgrounds to their own.

Staff are very appreciative of the exceptional way the school considers their welfare and workload. They talk positively about recent changes to the way in which the school records the progress that pupils make across the curriculum and how this significantly supports their work-life balance.

Governors' top priority is the welfare of all staff. They have a very wide range of expertise and knowledge, which they use extremely effectively to challenge and support leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not check well enough what pupils remember in some subjects. Subsequent learning does not take into account pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well over time. This slows their progress

across the curriculum. The school needs to ensure that teachers check what pupils know and remember across all subjects, and use this to inform future learning.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	104094
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	10343785
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair of governing body	Rebecca Roberts
Headteacher	Julie Gaughan
Website	www.georgefenthamschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 April 2014 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The deputy headteacher was appointed following the last inspection.
- The acting chair of the governing body has been in post since September 2024. There have been significant changes to the membership of the governing body since the last inspection.
- The school currently uses no alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian ethos. It is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2019. The next scheduled inspection should take place by November 2027.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to learn their views of the school.
- The lead inspector met with members of the board of governors, including the acting chair.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone to a school improvement advisor.
- The lead inspector met a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. This included free-text comments. They also considered additional feedback from parents. Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. For each deep dive, they held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult in Years 1 and 2.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lisa Buffery

Ofsted Inspector

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