

Fairhouse Community Junior School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique reference number | 114899 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 378951 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 March 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Cheryl Thompson |

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

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 171 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Joyce Sweeney |
| Headteacher | Jenny McCutcheon |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 November 2008 |
| School address | Long Riding Basildon SS14 1QP |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Cheryl Thompson

Additional inspector

Mark Jones

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed thirteen lessons taught by seven teachers. The work of learning support assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed as well as the school's breakfast club. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors heard a small number of pupils read in Year 3 and Year 6. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at school evaluation documents, safeguarding documentation, data on pupils' progress and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 54 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This junior school is a smaller than the average primary school. The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are much higher than usually found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also high at two fifths of the school roll. The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is average, and a few are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The school has an above-average and increasing proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through their education.

The school meets the current government floor standard. The school has achieved National Healthy School Status, Inclusion Quality Mark, Basic Skills Award and Foundation International Schools Award. In 2010, the school was recognised by the government as one of the 100 most improved schools in the country. The school works in partnership with a School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) provider.

Since the last inspection, there has been a change in five out of the eight teachers. Proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and who speak English as an additional language have increased considerably. The school provides a breakfast club.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils make good progress and develop high aspirations for their futures. Outstanding leadership and management and excellent relationships underpin the school's success. The school is good rather than outstanding because, although improving well, pupils' progress is not yet as rapid in English as it is in mathematics.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From low starting points in Year 3, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Throughout the school pupils make good progress overall and outstanding progress in mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers.
- Teaching is good with much that is outstanding. Through excellent relationships and very high expectations, teachers promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning very effectively. As a consequence, lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils work hard. There are two areas where teaching is not consistently good. On occasions, teachers' planning does not identify precisely what it is each group is to have learned by the end of the lesson and a small number of teachers lack expertise in teaching letter-sounds so the pace of these sessions is too slow to help pupils make good progress.
- Behaviour and safety are good in lessons and around the school. The school takes a very firm stand on any unacceptable behaviour so that exclusions have reduced considerably over time and racist incidents are rare.
- Leadership and management are outstanding with an exceptional capacity for further improvement. The headteacher's uncompromising ambition for the school, and view that 'satisfactory teaching is not good enough for our pupils', is shared by all staff and the governing body. The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of pupils very well. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is monitored rigorously and regularly. The senior team have a crystal clear

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picture of what is working well and what needs to improve. Senior teachers provide outstanding examples of high quality teaching and help their colleagues improve their performance exceptionally well. The governing body has an astute understanding of the school's performance and is not afraid to challenge the school to do even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' rate of progress further in English by:
 - providing even more coaching for staff to help improve their understanding of how to teach letters and sounds, so that they can do so at a brisk pace
 - ensuring all teachers' planning shows precisely what it is each group of pupils is expected to learn by the end of the lesson.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their children make good progress. Inspectors endorse their view; pupils' achievement is good. When pupils start in Year 3, school data indicate that they are approximately half a year behind in their learning. They make good progress in reading and writing, and outstanding progress in mathematics. By the end of Year 6 they have caught up so that their attainment is broadly in line with national averages and, in mathematics, a little above. A few more-able pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress and are working at the higher Level 6; a level normally expected of secondary-age pupils. Precise teaching, together with specialist resources, has helped a few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress. School data and pupils' work indicate that those new to the school often make rapid progress from their starting points.

Rapid progress in mathematics is brought about by all teachers and teaching assistants being very secure in how to teach the subject, a curriculum which ensures a steady increase in skills and many opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their learning in a range of subjects. Through excellent marking, teachers quickly identify misconceptions and, in daily 'guided intervention' sessions, help individuals overcome their difficulties through explicit explanations and further practice.

Through its excellent self-evaluation, the school identified the need for more innovative approaches to improving pupils' vocabulary, reading and writing, as well as developing pupils' skills in using letter and sounds to help them read and write. These approaches are proving successful. In an outstanding 'reading for meaning' session, Year 6 pupils made rapid progress in developing their understanding of inferring meaning from the lyrics of a pop song. In an outstanding 'listen up' session,

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Year 3 pupils were totally enthralled and involved in Roald Dahl's story of *The BFG* and very keen to discuss the vocabulary the author had used. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are enthusiastic about reading and can discuss their preferences for fiction, non-fiction and different genres. Pupils at the early stages of reading use letter-sounds they know to help them attempt unfamiliar words. By the time they leave the school pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average.

Quality of teaching

Parents, carers and pupils rightly consider that teaching is good. There are considerable strengths in teaching and few areas for improvement. A key strength is the excellent relationships through which teachers manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well. Pupils are guided very well to help them understand the need to behave appropriately, respect each other and have high aspirations of themselves. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they listen attentively and work hard because they want to succeed.

Excellent working arrangements between teachers and support staff ensure that lessons run smoothly and pupils have the support they need to succeed. For example, in an 'early morning work' session, teaching assistants knew which children they were to hear read and had prepared to do this so that on arrival in class, pupils settled very quickly to their tasks, thus developing good work habits. The support for individual Year 3 pupils struggling with reading is excellent, although the whole-class teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is more variable. When phonics is taught well, the pace is brisk, pupils' misconceptions are noted very quickly so that all pupils make good progress. Where teachers' expertise is less secure, the pace is too slow and pupils occasionally make satisfactory rather than good progress in these short sessions.

Teachers make excellent use of engaging resources, for example, the use of a video clip of a roller coaster ride provided an exciting stimulus for discussion and elicited a wide choice of vocabulary for pupils to use in their writing. Teachers provide a wide range of activities that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils learn about faiths and cultures other than their own and understand that there are many similarities between festivals. In an assembly, pupils demonstrated they knew a good deal about the recent Hindu celebration of Holi. In almost all lessons observed, teachers encouraged their pupils to think or reflect on issues with such questions as 'How would you feel?' or 'What do you think the right thing to do would be?' Such reflections make a good contribution to their spiritual development.

In the main, teachers plan their lessons in detail, ensuring that work and support is carefully matched to pupils' abilities and builds on previous learning. On occasions, when planning for groups of differing abilities, teachers do not make it explicit what it is these groups are expected to learn in the lesson. Consequently, it is difficult to measure their success and if they make enough progress.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents, carers and pupils think behaviour is good. Inspectors consider that pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. The school provides an excellent framework within which pupils can succeed in managing their own behaviour. For example, at break-times, all support staff are on duty in the playground, dressed in high visibility coats, so that pupils know that their behaviour is noted and if they need help, they can find staff quickly. The school's 'code of conduct' is based on the key values of respect and success and provides an excellent guide for pupils. They aspire to the award of 'gold star' and know that not only do they have to behave well, they also have to have good attendance, do their homework and look smart in their school uniform. Over time, behaviour and attendance have improved considerably as a result of this code. Attendance is average. As a result of such initiatives as 'girls allowed', when successful women came to talk to pupils about their jobs, pupils' aspirations have risen. In discussions, many older pupils have their hopes set on attending university and getting a good job.

Pupils know about types of bullying, such as that which is cyber or racist. They are confident that there is no such bullying in the school and know that should they have concerns, any member of staff will help them. Pupils say they enjoy school and older pupils like taking on responsibilities such as being peer mentors, play leaders or members of the school council. Pupils have a good idea of how to keep themselves and others safe and are well aware of safety on the internet. Pupils new to the school say they like school and that staff and pupils are friendly and make them feel welcome. The breakfast club provides a calm and purposeful start to the day. Pupils can do homework, read to adults and practise games such as chess.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding. There is no complacency in this successful school. Since the last inspection, it has made good improvement in all areas of its work and pupils' attainment has risen rapidly from being a year behind to being in line with the levels expected for their age. Principled leadership, excellent management systems and high quality teaching by the senior team are at the heart of the school's success. The school tackles discrimination robustly and equality of opportunity is promoted very effectively because the school knows exactly how well different groups of pupils are learning and can show that gaps in rates of progress are narrowing. Safeguarding systems follow recommended good practice and fully meet government requirements.

The subject knowledge and teaching expertise of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teachers are deployed very effectively to ensure a clear overview of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as well as to help staff improve and develop their practice. The school is very well placed to continue on its path of successful improvement.

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Ensuring pupils are well-equipped for their future stages of education is at the heart of curriculum planning. The curriculum has been skilfully tailored to address pupils' low literacy and numeracy skills when they start in Year 3. It meets pupils' needs very effectively because it provides them with a wide range of relevant opportunities to practise and reinforce their reading, writing and mathematical skills in subjects such as design and technology, history and geography. A wide range of trips and visitors to the school widen pupils' horizons. In lessons, there is a strong focus on pupils working together; they check each other's work and learn to make helpful comments. Each class works together to put on a show or display for parents. Relatively recent links with the infant school are having a good impact. For example, junior school leaders have worked alongside infant school staff to assess Year 2 pupils' work. These initiatives ensure a very smooth start to Year 3.

Staff are confident and always seeking to improve their practice. There is a very strong commitment to making sure teachers and learning support assistants have good opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge, often through high quality training provided by the school's own two Advanced Skills Teachers. The involvement of the school in the SCITT partnership has had a good impact on teachers' skills of monitoring and judging the quality of teaching. The governing body knows the school well and shares the headteacher's high aspirations for the school within its community.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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 | 46 | 46 | 8 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 8 | 47 | 40 | 5 |
| Secondary schools | 14 | 38 | 40 | 8 |
| Special schools | 28 | 48 | 20 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 15 | 50 | 29 | 5 |
| All schools | 11 | 46 | 38 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairhouse Community Junior School, Basildon, SS14 1QP

Thank you all for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped us to make our judgements about your school, which is providing you with a good education. These are the best things about the school.

- You enjoy school, make good progress and reach average levels of attainment.
- Your behaviour is good and you work and play very well together.
- Everyone looks after you well and teachers make sure you have work to make you think hard.
- Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teachers lead and manage the school exceptionally well.

There are some areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teachers and the governing body to:

- make sure that teaching of phonics always helps you make the best progress
- make sure that when teachers plan work for groups they are clear about what they want each group to have learned by the end of the lesson.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are very positive about learning and we were very impressed with how welcoming you are to visitors. You can help the school improve even further by continuing to work hard and making sure you attend school regularly to help your class win the weekly attendance award.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson
Lead inspector

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