

# Fairfield Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124582
<b>Local Authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	380923
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thompson

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	299
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Allison Coleman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Reed
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	High Road West Felixstowe IP11 9JB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 18 lessons taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with a group of pupils, staff and governors. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a representative sample of pupils' work, some policy documents and school reports. They scrutinised questionnaires returned from 95 parents and carers and 81 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What does the school's tracking information show about the progress and achievement of pupils?
- Is there a shared vision and embedded ambition amongst the staff?
- What are the barriers to learning that prevent pupils progressing better than they do?
- Are talented children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities sufficiently supported and challenged to enable them to progress as well as they can?
- Do middle leaders and other staff have sufficient opportunity to discuss and influence the future direction of the school?

## Information about the school

The school is a larger than average-sized infant school that includes a Nursery. The school is popular and is sometimes oversubscribed. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average and one in ten speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement, is well below average. The stability of the school's population is higher than that of similar schools. In September 2008, the school began working in close collaboration with the Colneis Junior School. The headteacher and senior staff of Fairfield also lead the Colneis Junior School. The school has been awarded Investors in People and Healthy School status together with the Basic Skillsmark and Activemark.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Fairfield Infants School provides an outstanding education. The headteacher and senior staff have integrated plans for improvement with that of the Colneis Junior School very successfully. Planning is thorough and based on accurate self-evaluation and effective use and analysis of high quality data. The staff have worked hard to provide a rich curriculum that is extremely relevant to the needs of all pupils. Pupils feel exceptionally safe in school, a view endorsed by their parents and carers. Aided by the rigorous enforcement of the school's good code of conduct, children's behaviour is outstanding both in classes and around the school. Children understand what is required to lead safe and healthy lives and contribute to their school and local communities very well. Parents and carers are extremely well informed and are enabled to play a significant role in the learning of their children. As a result, outcomes for individual and groups of pupils have improved and are now outstanding.

The governing body works very effectively with its counterpart in the junior school and holds joint meetings to ensure that plans and developments benefit all children. For example, the leadership team has been reorganised and strengthened leading to improved outcomes since the last inspection. The governing body is very well organised and has a range of expert knowledge and experience which it uses to drive improvement at a fast pace. Governors regularly visit lessons and some oversee curriculum areas to improve their understanding of the work of the school. As a result, governors know the strengths and weakness of the school very well and play a significant part in effectively evaluating the school's success and considering how it might be improved. Statutory requirements are met. The strengthened leadership team together with outstanding governance gives the school a good capacity to sustain further improvement. Leaders recognise that attainment in some subjects and teaching quality is not as good as it could be.

The exceptional care, guidance and support provided are particular strengths of the school and help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those that are vulnerable to make good progress. Provision for such groups is very well managed and targeted to enable pupils to make the best of the opportunities the school provides. The school treats each child as an individual and caters for their particular needs very effectively. Those children who are not performing as well as they should are identified early and effective actions taken to help speed up their progress. The small numbers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are particularly

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well supported. When needed, very good additional guidance is provided either on a one-to-one basis or by teaching assistants working with small groups in lessons. The school liaises exceptionally well with outside agencies to support the personal development and well-being of vulnerable children.

Despite this very good picture overall, the school has correctly identified that attainment in writing and mathematics could be higher. Leaders have recently developed a comprehensive plan that sets out the actions and targets needed to raise attainment. Early indications are that the plan is having a beneficial impact and attainment in these subjects is beginning to improve quickly. However, there is insufficient outstanding teaching to help pupils make exceptional progress consistently. Lesson observations show that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons, and more opportunities are needed to enable pupils to work independently and learn through finding things out for themselves.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise the attainment of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - increasing the proportion of outstanding lessons and eliminating all satisfactory teaching
  - ensuring all pupils are effectively challenged in all lessons
  - enabling pupils to learn more independently and to find things out for themselves.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

Pupils' achievement is good and their attainment is above average. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. Lesson observations and the school's data show that the progress made by pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good. The small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good and sometimes very good progress, particularly when they are provided with individual support. For example, a pupil with special needs was seen making good progress whilst learning to use numbers in multiples of ten on a computer with the help of a teaching assistant. Occasionally the pace of learning drops when the work in lessons is not sufficiently challenging or matched to pupils' needs or capabilities. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson after pupils had worked in groups to learn about sight, sound, touch and smell, they were not given enough opportunity to explain what they found out to the whole group and instead it was explained by the teacher.

Pupils make good progress in developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They reflect well on their experiences and success in games and are sympathetic to the feelings and values of other children and adults. For their age they are appropriately aware of their own culture and their contacts with schools overseas helps them to develop an awareness of other lifestyles. Pupils play an active part in the school council, raising funds for charities and singing in a choir to

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provide entertainment for adults. The rate of attendance is above average. Pupils are eager to work together and with their teachers. Pupils’ good and improving reading, writing and numeracy skills and their well developed personal qualities prepare them well for their future.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The quality of teaching is good overall but it varies from satisfactory to outstanding. The aims of most lessons are made clear and there are good relationships between pupils and their teachers. Pupils are taught in mixed-ability lessons in Years 1 and 2 and are divided into groups by ability within each lesson. These arrangements make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and good progress. Most teachers give oral and written feedback to enable pupils to have a better understanding of what is needed to succeed and improve. The best lessons are brisk and challenging. These effective lessons are planned well, expectations are high, and teachers use their knowledge and inventiveness to encourage and inspire pupils to learn. For example, pupils were seen progressing well in a Year 1 literacy lesson while using rhymes to help them understand stories, and progressing extremely well in a Year 2 mathematics lesson while learning to use numbers and the vocabulary of numbers. Both these lessons were well planned and teachers used their knowledge of the subjects to inspire children to learn. Teaching assistants made good contributions to pupils’ learning in these lessons.

<sup>1</sup> 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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The curriculum is exceptionally broad, creative and flexible. It is adjusted each year in the light of assessment in order to improve motivation and enable pupils to better reach their full potential. The children learn in lessons based mainly on topics which cover a number of curriculum subjects. For example, when learning about penguins pupils develop knowledge of geography, history and science. The linking of subjects together in this way makes learning more fun and meaningful. The curriculum covers the core subjects of reading, writing, mathematics and science, and other subjects such as design and technology, information and communications technology, music, religious education and person, social and health education. An excellent range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including outdoor games, Eco club, choir, recorder, art and crafts and drama, are provided. Outdoor games and the drama club are the most popular and well attended.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for the future of the school and their high expectations are communicated to the staff. All share a common drive to secure improvements. Leaders have established rigorous ways to monitor teaching, provision and outcomes. They set realistic yet challenging targets and place very strong emphasis on treating each pupil as an individual, without any discrimination. Leaders are determined that all pupils should have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential. Variations in the performance of individuals and groups of pupils are evaluated carefully and appropriate steps are taken to address any underachievement.

Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Rigorous checks are carried out on all newly appointed staff and exceptionally good central records are kept. The school has clear policies for health and safety, which are reviewed regularly and implemented effectively. Safety checks are carried out by appropriate external authorities and any recommendations they make are acted upon well. Staff have been appropriately trained in child protection and regular risk assessments are undertaken. The school engages well with outside agencies to support the safety and well-being of the pupils and staff.

Leaders have a good understanding of the community they serve and the school's ethos helps to promote good community cohesion. Pupils from different backgrounds

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work in harmony and are tolerant of each other. The school has undertaken a clear analysis of the local socio-economic, ethnic and religious needs of the local community. It values the background of all its pupils and has effective plans to engage with a range of outside community groups. Children take part in choral and drama events outside the school. They learn about other cultures through the school's links with a primary school in Uganda and through their efforts to collect gift-aid goods for children in Romania. The 'Friends of Fairfield' links parents and carers of all backgrounds to the school and pupils learn topics based on their surroundings in Felixstowe.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery with skill levels that are below those expected for their age. As a result of recent changes, all children spend a full year in the Reception class which helps increase the number and length of opportunities for learning. Staff use their good understanding of how young children learn to inspire and help them to make good progress from their various starting points. They make especially good progress in developing their problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills. By the time children reach the end of the Reception Year their attainment is broadly in line with the expected level for their age and improving quickly. Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor areas. Activities are well planned and there is a good balance between activities chosen by children and those led by teachers. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to children's learning and enjoyment. The well-developed system for tracking children's progress is providing good information about their learning and where it might be improved. The leader of this phase ensures that children's welfare needs are met well. Staff are skilled at promoting positive attitudes and ensuring that



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all children are engaged and included. The effective links with parents and carers, and outside agencies, make a strong contribution to children's learning and progress. Safeguarding procedures are good and given a high priority.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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**

An average number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Responses were extremely positive and supportive. The overwhelming majority felt that their children enjoy school and said that they are happy with their children's experience at school. One parent said, 'The school is one of the most nurturing environments I have come across. It is friendly, welcoming and caring. It is obvious that senior management and all school staff care deeply about the children.' Another said, 'My son comes home from school bubbling over with the activities he has enjoyed each day. His progress is good and I feel that he is treated as an individual which is helping his confidence to grow both in and out of school.' A very small minority raised some individual concerns, such as the school does not take their suggestions into account. However, inspectors judged the school's links with parents and carers to be outstanding and could not find any weaknesses to support parental concerns.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairfield Infant 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 299 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	74	25	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	77	21	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	45	48	51	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	55	39	41	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	64	32	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	59	62	32	34	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	61	34	36	1	1	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)	50	53	35	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	51	42	44	3	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	46	41	43	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	44	46	41	43	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	58	39	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	63	66	29	31	1	1	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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 October 2011

Dear Children

### **Inspection of Fairfield Infant School, Felixstowe, IP11 9JB**

My colleagues and I enjoyed our visit to your school and welcomed the opportunity to see you at work in your lessons. We judged your school to be outstanding. That means that it has got most things right and provides you with an excellent education. We thought your behaviour in classes and around the school was outstanding and liked the way the school involves your parents and carers so that they can help you learn. Your school looks after and keeps you safe exceptionally well. You are so lucky to have such a school and I know from what you and your parents and carers have told us you like your school very much.

Mrs Reed and the other adults in the school continue to make changes to improve your education further. They have provided you with a new programme of lessons to make your learning even more exciting and enjoyable. My colleagues and I know that you like the lunchtime and outside school activities very much, particularly the visits you make to the beach and other places of interest. Your class teachers continue to find new ways to help you learn.

There are still things that could be better. We have asked Mrs Reed, governors and your class teachers to find ways to help you reach higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics by:

- increasing the number of outstanding lessons and ensuring that all are good or better
- ensuring you are always challenged in lessons
- letting you learn more by doing things and learning from what you find out.

You can help them by always doing your best work.

Best wishes

Peter Thompson  
Lead inspector

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