

# Fairfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134621
<b>Local authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	381699
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Barbara Hudson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	450
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Strachan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2009
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 16 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at work in pupils' books and documentation related to safeguarding, pupils' progress records, teachers' assessments and school development planning. In total, 132 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed. Questionnaires returned by staff and pupils were also taken into account

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

- The amount of progress made by the different ability groups, particularly the average-ability groups in Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' use of assessment and marking of pupils' work to set challenging tasks for all groups of pupils.
- The targets the school sets itself to establish if they are rigorous enough and if they are met.

## Information about the school

Most of the pupils who attend this above-average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. A smaller than average proportion is from a minority ethnic background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language, a very small minority of whom is at the early stage of learning English. A smaller-than-average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. A smaller percentage of pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A few have a statement of special educational needs. The school has acquired a number of awards, including the gold award for Healthy Schools status.

In the previous school year, 2010 to 2011, the school underwent extensive refurbishment and building work. There is a childcare and before- and after-school provision on the school site but this is led and managed independently and subject to a separate inspection.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

Fairfield Primary is a good school. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school because they learn lots of new things. Their achievement is good. Pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 6 from average starting points when they enter the nursery. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are more potentially vulnerable than most, and the small proportion of pupils learning to speak English as an additional language, make good progress because the school makes good provision for their needs. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where they are cared for outstandingly well and the teaching and curriculum are good. Parents, carers and pupils hold very positive views about the school

In Key Stages 1 and 2 most of the teaching is good or better. However, there is a very small amount of satisfactory teaching. This is most often seen when pupils are grouped by ability for literacy and numeracy lessons. The more-able pupils in each of the sets for these lessons are not always sufficiently challenged and, therefore, on such occasions make satisfactory rather than good progress. Most lessons are characterised by teachers' good explanations and questioning to ensure pupils' knowledge is accurate and misconceptions are eradicated. Although the approach to marking pupils' work is good overall, and usually provides very useful feedback for pupils on how to improve their work, there is some variation in the quality of feedback for pupils between classes.

The curriculum provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences within lessons and in the many well-attended after-school clubs. The good quality care, guidance and support pupils receive ensure they feel exceptionally safe. The school is a harmonious and inclusive community. Pupils get on very well together and with staff. Their attendance, punctuality and behaviour are good and pupils relish having jobs to do.

Leadership and management are good because senior leaders are determined to ensure that areas for development are successfully addressed. Rigorous systems are in place to check pupils' progress and development and to ensure that pupils have equality of opportunity. The school's self-evaluation effectively ensures that strengths and areas for improvement are accurately identified. Systems for evaluating the quality of teaching are in place, but the school recognises that these are not yet focused sharply enough on moving satisfactory quality teaching to good and

improving the good teaching to outstanding. Since the previous inspection, the school's plans for improvements have become much more focused and improvements have been successfully achieved, for example, using tracking procedures to ensure individual pupils are achieving as well as they can and improving pupils' attendance. As a result, the school demonstrates good capacity to sustain improvements.

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

- Ensure teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that when pupils are grouped for literacy and numeracy lessons, the more-able pupils in each set are always sufficiently challenged
  - using the school's existing good practice to develop a consistent approach to providing pupils with feedback about their work so that all are clear about what they have learned and understand how to improve further
  - sharpening the focus with which teaching is evaluated by senior leaders in order to raise the quality of teaching consistently to that of the best.

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

<b>2</b>
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Most pupils are enthusiastic, interested in their work and keen to improve its quality. They persevere and take pride in their work. They listen carefully to instructions, work cooperatively in pairs and groups and are confident in articulating their thinking and expressing their point of view. These attributes were very evident in a mixed-age Year 3 and 4 English lesson where pupils were initially engaged in reading aloud and then used the text to answer a variety of questions.

Work observed in lessons, and in pupils' books, together with the school's own data confirms that most pupils make good progress and are on track to meet the school's challenging attainment targets. While progress is good overall, it is inconsistent because the higher attaining pupils in each of the literacy and numeracy sets are not always given sufficiently challenging work. The good support provided for pupils learning to speak English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable than most, enables them to make good progress.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their school. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They make a very valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school and to the well-being of other pupils, especially when they act as prefects and school ambassadors. Pupils know their opinions and suggestions are valued and they appreciated the input that they have had into their new school building. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy through the frequent reminders in lessons and in the dining hall. Pupils' above-average basic skills, combined with their above-average attendance and good punctuality, equip them well for the next stages in life and education.

*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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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?**

Adults have very positive relationships with pupils. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use well to explain new things to the pupils. They ask pertinent questions to ensure understanding is good and they correct misconceptions. Teaching assistants provide very effective and targeted support for individual and groups of pupils. In the good and outstanding lessons, work that pupils are given is exceptionally well matched to the different ability groups within a class, and pupils are set a challenging amount of work to do in the time available. In the few satisfactory lessons, work is not always sufficiently challenging for more-able pupils and pupils are not as clear as they could be about what they are learning. The approach to marking pupils' work is good and consistently used across the school. The way in which this information is fed back to pupils is inconsistent, however, resulting in some pupils being unclear about what they need to do next to improve their work.

The good curriculum is appropriately modified to meet the needs of pupils, particularly for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Literacy and numeracy skills are carefully woven into most lessons. However, pupils are not always provided with sufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology in lessons to fully develop their skills. Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional activities in school time and beyond, which aid their personal development and well-being.

Pupils feel that they are cared for well and parents and carers agree. Staff keep a vigilant watch over all pupils, particularly those who may be more vulnerable than most. Every effort has been made to reduce the disruption caused by the recent building work on the school site and to ensure pupils are safe and secure. Strong links with a very wide range of agencies to support pupils and their families and the way in which the procedures for keeping pupils and staff safe are embedded in the

<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

culture of the school, and are also effective in promoting good care. Procedures to ensure that pupils come to school and be punctual are robust. Parents and carers are consulted about their children’s well-being and are actively encouraged to support their learning.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The ambition, drive and high aspirations of the headteacher and the senior leadership team play a fundamental part in the school’s good improvement. This is evident in the way in which individual pupils’ progress is carefully tracked to make sure that they are achieving well enough. The impact of this team approach, along with better-focused monitoring and evaluation procedures are seen in the school’s accurate judgements about what it does well and where it needs to improve. The school recognises that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching to ensure it is consistently good or better is not yet sharp enough. Middle leaders are increasingly confident in their role, are committed to sustaining improvements and give good support to developing the school, for example, through evaluating provision for their subjects.

Relationships with parents and carers are good and they are becoming more involved in supporting their children’s learning and development. Members of the governing body play an active part in shaping the strategic direction of the school and recognise that they need to become more involved in setting appropriate priorities for the school. Good partnerships with support agencies, local authority services, other schools and universities add to the quality of pupils’ learning.

The school adopts good procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment and staff take every opportunity to emphasise the need for safety to pupils in lessons and around school. Community cohesion is promoted well within the school, but provision to broaden pupils’ understanding of other beliefs and cultures is satisfactory. The school has plans in place to address this. Equality of opportunity is positively promoted and all pupils are equally involved in a wide variety of enjoyable activities. The school has recognised that more-able pupils are not always challenged well enough in some literacy and numeracy lessons and is starting to take steps to address this. The good outcomes for pupils and the efficient use of resources ensure that there is good value for money.

*These are the grades for the 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	3

<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a confident start in this happy, friendly and stimulating environment. They settle very quickly because of the excellent care that they receive and the positive relationships between staff and children and their parents and carers. Most children enter the Nursery class with the skills and knowledge expected for their age, however, writing and calculation are more frequently below expectations. They make good progress and achieve well.

A good range of activities, both indoors and outside, provide children with a wide range of learning experiences, enabling them to make good progress. Staff are very adept at planning activities which follow the children's interests. A 'pirate' boat provided children with much enjoyment and staff took advantage of this as they developed key skills of speaking, reading, writing and counting. Staff encourage the children to talk about what they are doing, by engaging them in discussions and asking pertinent questions, which moves their learning on. A good example was seen in a Reception class lesson that linked Diwali and light very successfully together. Staff encourage children to suggest developments to and extensions of the activities in which they participate. They take careful note of what the children say and do. This helps them plan tasks matched well to children's needs to ensure that they make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff are vigilant about ensuring children's welfare needs are very well met. The Early Years Foundation Stage team is well led and managed by the team leader. The team has a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development. Progress towards meeting the areas for development is not always annotated well enough.

### *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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

One parent wrote on the questionnaire, 'My child is happy, well-educated and very safe. She comes out smiling every day.' This statement typifies the sentiments of most parents and carers. In a very small minority of cases parents and carers



disagreed with the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, that the school does not always take account of their suggestions and concerns, and the way in which the school is led and managed.

The inspectors raised these concerns with the school and satisfied themselves that the issues were known to the school and that the senior staff were addressing them. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was good and the pupils said that any incidents of bullying were quickly managed by the staff. Many parents and carers were appreciative of the way in which the staff did not allow the building work to impinge on their children's education.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairfield Primary 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	63	46	35	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	67	40	30	2	2	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	62	47	64	48	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	45	66	50	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	65	49	60	45	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	45	64	48	6	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	41	70	53	7	5	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)	53	40	72	55	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	44	69	52	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	41	57	43	13	10	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	36	63	48	15	11	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	61	46	54	41	13	10	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	56	51	39	4	3	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 is 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.**



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Fairfield Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7PW**

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and appreciated the honest way in which you answered our questions. I am sure you will be delighted to know that we judge your school to be a good school. This means that the school has lots of good things about it and some that need improving.

These are some of the good things about your school.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their education.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 work hard and reach above-average standards.
- Adults look after you well and help you get along together.
- All the staff and governing body are determined to make the school even better.

Even in good schools there are still things that can be improved. We have asked your headteacher, staff and the governing body to look at more ways to:

- help to make sure that all lessons are as good as the very best ones
- ensure that when you are set for literacy and numeracy those of you who are quick learners are always given work that really challenges you to learn
- make sure that in all lessons you know what you are learning and that that you understand how you can make your work even better.

You can help the school become even better by continuing to work as hard as you do now in your lessons. I would like to wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Hudson  
Lead inspector

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