

Forefield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104871
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	395528
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2012
Lead inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E. Gilkes
Headteacher	Mr R. F. Naylor
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
School address	Forefield Lane Crosby Liverpool L23 9TJ
Telephone number	0151 924 3971
Fax number	0151 924 3971
Email address	head.ForefieldJunior@schools.sefton.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson
Dave Blackburne
Drew Crawshaw

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons led by 15 teachers. Two of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils at play and during lunchtime and heard pupils read. Meetings were held with staff, different groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, the local authority and senior leaders and managers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books. They considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 85 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized junior school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than found nationally. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is smaller than found nationally. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. This includes pupils supported at school action plus and pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Some pupils attend the out-of-hours childcare provision housed on the infant school site. This provision is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has received Healthy School status, Active School Award and the Eco Green Flag Award.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school with significant strengths in the teaching of reading and pupils' behaviour. Overall effectiveness is not outstanding because not all pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. Nonetheless, pupils achieve well because of strong teaching, an imaginative curriculum and effective relationships. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers would recommend the school to others. The positive views of many are summed up in the comment 'I feel lucky to have such a fantastic school to send my children to.'
- Pupils make good progress from their higher than average starting points and leave Year 6 with attainment levels that are above the national average. Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly strong. Although the number of pupils gaining the higher levels matches the national picture, more-able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some teaching is outstanding but it is good overall. Effective teaching strategies enable pupils to flourish and make good gains in their learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils' exceptional attitudes to learning and each other underpin their exemplary behaviour. They are highly considerate of others and manage their own behaviour very well. Pupils are acutely aware of different types of bullying and they have a strong perspective on how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher's clear vision for excellence permeates all aspects of school life. Consequently, teaching is never less than good and pupils thrive academically and socially. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good because it has led to sustained improvements over time. Systems to check the work of the school are embedded but some of these activities do not happen regularly enough or fully involve all key leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement so that all pupils, particularly the most able, make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points by:
 - ensuring teachers always take full account of assessment information to plan activities which challenge all pupils
 - developing teachers' marking and target-setting procedures so that pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve in subjects other than writing.
- Enhance the leadership and management of teaching and learning so that teaching across the school consistently matches the best by:
 - ensuring the activities to monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' learning happen with greater frequency
 - ensuring whole school assessment information is used to drive and check on the impact of school improvement on whole-cohorts and groups of pupils
 - exploiting the skills and expertise of all leaders and managers so they are fully involved in the school's self-evaluation strategies
 - extending the opportunities for teachers to observe each other so that exceptional practice is shared fully.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and are keen to succeed. Their excellent attitudes mean they work with enthusiasm and determination even when they encounter challenges. In a Year 4 lesson on division, all pupils were absorbed in their individual tasks. They worked at a good pace and with exceptional levels of concentration. In a Year 6 lesson on shape, pupils worked extremely well in small groups to sort quadrilaterals. They all took part in the discussion and showed a willingness to listen to others and accept other points of view. Activities such as these ensure learning is at least good. These tasks effectively promote pupils independence, resilience and social skills so they are well equipped to become self-reliant learners.

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge that are higher than expected for their age. They make good progress from this point so their attainment is above the national average by the time they leave Year 6. Although English attainment fell to match the national average in 2011, inspection evidence confirms this is not a typical reflection of pupils' performance. All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree pupils make good progress. Almost all pupils say they learn a lot in lessons. Evidence from lesson observations and pupils' books confirm most pupils make better than expected progress across the school. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers so that they attain as well as all pupils nationally. Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards to their targets because of the effective support they receive in lessons. However, not all pupils, particularly the most able, make rapid enough progress from their starting points. This is because they do not always receive enough challenge to move their learning on at a quicker pace.

Pupils achieve well across all aspects of the curriculum because they use and improve their reading, writing, numeracy and communication skills in other subjects. They can represent data in science and geography and use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to produce comic strips in English. Pupils make very good gains in their reading ability so their attainment levels are above average by the time they leave the school. They are competent and confident readers who critically analyse different texts. The high quality and mature responses by Year 6 pupils to *Romeo and Juliet* clearly demonstrate their understanding of plot and characters. Achievement in mathematics has quickly recovered from a dip in 2010 because pupils have a good grasp of number and they apply their skills to solve problems.

Quality of teaching

All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire and the overwhelming majority of pupils agree that teaching is good. Inspectors found teaching is never less than good over time and some teaching is inspirational. Teaching is strong because whole-school strategies are consistently applied and all teachers deliver purposeful and imaginative activities. This means learning is meaningful and relevant and pupils are excited by their lessons. Strong subject knowledge means teachers carefully plan so pupils acquire new skills and knowledge quickly. Resources, particularly ICT, are used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning. A history lesson was brought alive as pupils used search engines to research and produce a fact-file on Florence Nightingale. All teachers enable pupils to deepen their knowledge by providing meaningful opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and practise their skills across a range of subject areas. Teaching is at its best when assessment information is used with precision. This means activities are finely tuned to meet the needs of all pupils leading to good levels of challenge and rapid gains in learning. However, this is not consistent in all classes.

Good teaching in all subject areas is underpinned by an effective curriculum. Whole-school planning ensures skills and knowledge are carefully built on as pupils move throughout the school. A systematic approach to reading means this subject is taught well across the school. Teachers ensure pupils read regularly to promote accuracy, fluency and understanding. The teaching of writing is improving quickly because teachers' marking clearly identifies how pupils can improve and they have clear targets to identify the small steps they need to take to achieve their goals. This practice is less well developed in mathematics and other subject areas. Respectful relationships and a broad curriculum underpin pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers and most pupils agree there is a good standard of behaviour in the school. A very small minority of parents and carers disagree that learning is not disrupted by poor behaviour. Inspectors found pupils' behaviour is better than good; it is exemplary. It is a strength of the school as a result of the welcoming and caring ethos. Pupils show high levels of respect and consideration for adults and each other so that learning is rarely disrupted. This means all pupils are treated with dignity and are able to flourish in a calm and safe environment. Pupils know how the school expects them to behave and they live up to these expectations. The consistent application of the behaviour policy and pupils' very mature attitudes means they take ownership for their behaviour. Consequently, adults rarely need to intervene. Pupils' behaviour outside of lessons is equally strong. This was evident during a wet lunch break as all pupils entered the

hall quietly to watch a film. Pupils' ability to consider others meant there was no disruption, despite the large numbers gathered together. School records confirm pupils behave exceptionally well on a day-to-day basis, there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and that behaviour has improved over time.

Staff, pupils, parents and carers unanimously agree that pupils feel safe. Different groups of pupils and the very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school deals well with all types of bullying. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes bullying. Older pupils talk with confidence about how bullying can mean isolating others, rather than just physical or verbal abuse. They say bullying rarely happens in school because teachers are good role models and they learn a lot about bullying. Pupils understand why racist and homophobic name-calling is unacceptable because they value individual differences. Pupils who find learning more difficult are confident they are not singled out by others. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe outside of school. They are able to talk about the strategies they would use to avoid gang culture and to keep themselves safe when using personal computers. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance levels and their consistent punctuality to school and lessons.

Leadership and management

The highly committed headteacher effectively promotes a child-centred ethos so that pupils' enjoyment and well-being are firmly at the heart of the school. He is ably supported by a strong and cohesive staff team who share the same ambition and drive for excellence. The systems to manage the performance of teachers are embedded and fruitful so that teaching is never less than good. Teaching is skilfully monitored so that practitioners receive clear feedback on their performance. Consequently, support and training are well matched to the needs of the school and the individual. However, as the school recognises, these monitoring activities do not happen frequently enough or fully exploit the skills and expertise of all leaders. Good opportunities exist for teachers to observe each other but this does not always take full account of all the exceptional practice across the school.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school. Although they offer senior leaders and managers an appropriate amount of challenge, the systems to routinely check on the school's progress sometimes lack rigour. The plans to drive the school forward are appropriately focused on relative weaknesses because self-evaluation is accurate. Senior leaders are quick in recognising and addressing issues. For example, the dip in mathematics attainment became a whole-school priority leading to secure improvements and raised attainment levels in 2011. This track record coupled with the school's success in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection mean there is good capacity to secure further improvement.

The school provides well for equality of opportunity because there is little variation between groups and few incidents of harassment. Pupils at risk of underperforming are quickly identified because the systems to check on pupils' progress are firmly established. Nonetheless, the use of assessment information to support self-evaluation and drive school improvement is under-developed. This is because the school does not evaluate the information on a regular enough basis to measure the impact of their work on whole cohorts and specific groups of pupils.

Positive relationships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication which is complemented by an informative and up-to-date website. A range of partnerships

are used to enhance pupils' well-being and learning. For example, during the inspection, some pupils participated in a multi-skills session hosted by the local High School. All statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding are firmly in place.

The well-balanced and imaginative curriculum effectively meets the needs and interests of most pupils. Creative links between subjects provide good opportunities for pupils to apply their well developed skills across the curriculum. Themed Days, such as the Victorian Day, bring topics to life and create memorable experiences which deepen pupils' understanding of the areas they are learning. A wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' enjoyment and learning.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is firmly linked to teaching, curriculum provision and the systems to promote outstanding behaviour. Pupils well-developed social skills are evident in the care and respect they show to each other and their environment. The Year 4 unit of work on India is one example of how pupils have first-hand opportunities to learn about different cultures and faiths. Finally, the well-planned and highly effective assemblies enable pupils to reflect on themselves and their community and to consider moral issues. Consequently, they are well equipped to live in a diverse modern Britain.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



27 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forefield Junior School, Liverpool, L23 9TJ

We had a wonderful time when we recently came to inspect your school. It was lovely to meet such happy and mature pupils and to observe how well you work and play together. We were very impressed by the quality of work in your books. Thank you for sharing your views with us. This really helped us to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Forefield Juniors. We think you attend a good school. These are the main things we found out during the inspection.

- You make good progress over time so that your attainment is above average by the time you leave school. Your achievement in reading is very strong.
- You are enthusiastic learners. You work hard and are keen to do well. You enjoy all the clubs the school offers.
- Your behaviour during the inspection and over time is outstanding. This is because you are considerate and respectful to others. You are very good at managing your own behaviour so adults rarely need to remind you to be sensible.
- You feel very safe in school and think bullying is well managed. You have a good understanding of different types of bullying and you know how to keep yourselves safe. Your attendance is above average and you are punctual to lessons. Well done!
- Your teachers are very good at making your learning interesting and fun.

To get even better we have asked the people in charge of your school to help you make greater gains in your learning by always giving you challenging activities. We have also asked them to think about the ways they check on teaching and how well you are learning. It really was a pleasure to meet you. You are a credit to your school and your families.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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