

Fairfield School

White Lee Road, Batley, West Yorkshire, WF17 8AS

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make at least good progress in personal and social development. They are able to do this because they make good and occasionally outstanding progress in communication skills. This means that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training.
- The vast majority of pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Sometimes they make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress here because they spend an increasing amount of time developing and applying their skills in adult situations.
- Teaching is good; some is outstanding. In most lessons, pupils learn well because they enjoy what is planned for them to do.
- The range of subjects and courses offered is different in each phase of school and carefully designed to meet each pupil's needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make an excellent start to their learning as the school's partnership with parents is outstanding.
- Students feel nurtured and well cared for. This is because staff ensure that pupils feel comfortable and confident at all times.
- The leadership has high expectations of everyone involved with the school and staff are encouraged and supported to improve their teaching. This promotes continuous school improvement.
- The governing body makes an excellent contribution to leadership because members have a very clear vision and good knowledge of what is happening in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress across years is inconsistent.
- Occasionally, work planned for pupils in lessons is not sufficiently demanding.
- Data are not checked against the national picture frequently enough to ensure that targets set are as challenging as they could be.
- Attendance is not high enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, five jointly with the deputy headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector made short visits jointly with the deputy headteacher to seven classrooms. Inspectors held discussions with key staff, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body as well as holding a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the school’s procedures for safeguarding in gaining an accurate view of its performance. They looked at the headteacher’s reports to the governing body, the school development plan, records of lesson observations, targets set for teachers and documents used to track pupils’ progress.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and took account of 12 responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The headteacher was on long-term sick leave at the time of the inspection.

Inspection team

Pauline Hilling-Smith, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Hicks, Team inspector	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Most pupils have severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Some pupils additionally have complex medical conditions, autism or a sensory impairment.
- A small number of more-able students join the school for the sixth form.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. Sixty per cent of pupils are of Asian (Asian British, Pakistani or Indian) origin and 40% are of White British origin.
- All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides extra funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families is well above average.
- The school entered into a cooperative trust in September 2012 with five neighbouring primary schools and a secondary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the percentage of outstanding achievement, particularly in mathematics and for older pupils, by:
 - checking progress against national data more frequently so that targets set are always as challenging as they can be.
- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - reducing the amount of time pupils spend waiting for attention
 - minimising the amount of time teachers spend talking to the class group and maximising the amount of time pupils spend getting on with tasks at just the right level of difficulty for them
 - ensuring that targets set for pupils in lessons are sufficiently demanding
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to work on their own and find things out for themselves.
- Increase attendance by communicating more strongly the impact of good attendance on achievement to pupils, parents and staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All students are working below the levels expected nationally when they enter the school, as a result of their disabilities and special educational needs. The vast majority of students make good progress in literacy and numeracy when compared to pupils with similar starting points.
- Pupils make good and occasionally outstanding progress in personal, social and life skills. They are able to do this because they often make outstanding progress in the development of communication skills. This is as a result of everyone making sure they use signs, gestures and facial expression as well as words when speaking.
- All students in the sixth form leave the school with qualifications which prepare them well for the next step in their education or training.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start because the environment is organised very carefully to enable children to learn most effectively at all times.
- Pupils make good progress when they have opportunities to apply their skills; for example, when they visit local shops or go to a local leisure centre.
- Progress in numeracy and for older pupils, although good, is not always as strong as progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in literacy. This is because teachers do not check pupils' progress against national expectations as often as they could. As a result, targets set are sometimes not as challenging as they could be.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding learn at the same good rate as other students. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
- Pupils make good or better progress when they are actively involved in tasks. For example, in a numeracy lesson, all the pupils had their own apparatus to use to learn about numbers. Good progress was made because all the pupils were able to handle objects and use them to develop their understanding of quantities.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) strongly agree that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teaching enables most students to make good and occasionally outstanding progress in personal development.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to keep pupils' interest and enable them to be fully involved in the activities planned for them: for example, when pupils act and make films in the studio, where the multi-screen brings experiences to life for them.
- The teaching of communication and reading is a strength because teachers have a good subject knowledge. However, the teaching of numeracy is not as well developed, notably for older pupils, because they are not always challenged sufficiently.
- Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and pupils do not spend as much time as they could getting on with tasks at just the right level of difficulty. Very occasionally, pupils spend too much time waiting with nothing to do. Sometimes pupils are not challenged as much as they could be because teachers do not always plan for pupils to work on their own or find things out for themselves as much as they could do.
- Teaching assistants and other adults contribute a lot to the achievement of the students through good support, for example by working closely with individual pupils. This has a good effect on pupils' achievement.
- The school is continuously making adjustments to teaching, for example by teachers planning activities that are more demanding and asking questions that make pupils think hard. This is having a good effect on pupils' progress, but the school recognises that there is still more to do.
- Parents agree strongly that their children are well taught and are particularly pleased by their

progress in personal development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The atmosphere in school is warm and caring and pupils are very polite and welcoming. Pupils try exceptionally hard to live up to the expectations set for them because relationships between everyone are very strong.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying and parents agree with this view. Pupils say that the school is a 'happy' and 'generous' school where everyone is 'friends' and everyone feels safe. Pupils highly value the care and support adults provide and would like, in their words, 'to stay here forever!'
- Parents describe the school as an oasis of calm and identify the warm, friendly feeling in the school. The parent liaison officer works well with parents and assists them in coordinating the work of an often wide range of agencies involved with the family.
- Students in the sixth form learn to keep themselves and others safe at all times. They understand, for example, what precautions they must take when they are involved in a climbing activity. They know they must consider carefully what actions they take when socialising, either on the computer or when they are involved in leisure activities.
- Students work well together. For example, they share out the tasks and run a community café successfully one morning each week. However, sometimes students could do more towards the running of this activity.
- The plans for personal, health, social and emotional development are at the centre of everything the school does. As pupils progress through the school, they build up an ever-increasing understanding of how to make the right choices and express their needs and wishes.
- Attendance is broadly average. However, the school knows that it needs to do more to raise the importance of the level of attendance with parents, staff and those pupils who can come to school more regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- The school continues to be well led and managed by the deputy headteacher and team of senior leaders. The vision for how the school can develop further, established with the governing body, is communicated to, and by, everyone throughout the school. The school has an accurate view of its own performance and knows that more priority needs to be given to promoting good attendance, achievement in numeracy and to ensuring that pupils are always engaged throughout lessons on tasks which enable them to make good progress.
- Team leaders have a good impact on school improvement because the plans they make are ambitious and reviewed carefully. The work the school does with other schools in the use of ICT to aid communication contributes well to the achievement of pupils in these partner schools.
- The school's system for keeping an eye on how well pupils are doing is well organised. Staff ensure that any pupil at risk of underachieving is identified and procedures are put in place to prevent this happening. The school makes effective use of the nationally published information showing the progress of pupils with a similar starting point, comparing it with the progress of pupils in the school. However, this check is not carried out frequently enough. As a result, very occasionally targets set are not as ambitious as they could be.
- The leadership of teaching and performance is effective. Procedures to check the quality of teaching are detailed and thorough, and enable leaders to provide accurate and helpful information to support teachers in improving their practice. There is an increasingly good link between teachers' performance and pay.
- Leaders ensure that additional funds, such as the pupil premium, are used to good effect by providing computer equipment and additional opportunities for eligible pupils. Teachers ensure that these additional resources are accessed by eligible pupils and it is clear that the way the funding is being used is making a positive difference. Inequality and discrimination are not

tolerated.

- The plans made for pupils are different and distinctive in the 'wings' of the school, which correspond to the different school phases. These plans prioritise pupils' needs and capitalise on an increasing number of learning experiences out in the community as pupils progress through the school. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is promoted well in these plans.
- The local authority supports the school well through a light-touch approach. It offers proportionate support through an adviser who is keenly aware of the needs of the school in changing circumstances. She works closely with the governors to set priorities, for example, for the recruitment of the headteacher.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent. Partnership with parents is outstanding as a result of excellent links between home and school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body contributes very well to the leadership of the school because governors seek answers to probing questions. They gain first-hand evidence through the involvement they have with pupils, parents and staff. The Chair ensures the effectiveness of the governing body in meeting the needs of the school very well and takes steps to enable governors to perform at the highest level. However, governors do not receive information frequently enough on how well pupils are progressing in comparison to national data, and this occasionally limits the questions they can ask. Governors manage the budget effectively and make sure that all safeguarding and child protection procedures are rigorous and meet requirements. They are clear about how the pupil premium is being spent and can identify the positive effect this is having on eligible pupils. Governors are fully included in information about how well teachers are performing and oversee the link between the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and teachers' pay.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107802
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	400937

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	21
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Naomi Finch
Headteacher	Richard Ware
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2010
Telephone number	01924 326111
Fax number	01924 325702
Email address	office.fairfield@edukirklees.net

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