

Fairfields Primary School

Council Road, Basingstoke, RG21 3DH]

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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' standards are above average when they leave the school because of the good progress most pupils make.
- The progress of particular groups of pupils is also good because of the strong support that is provided for them.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of achievement and behaviour within a stimulating learning environment where good relationships flourish. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- The school makes effective use of its teaching assistants because they are focused on pupils' learning.
- Behaviour in class and around school is good; pupils say they feel safe, and they are keen to learn.
- Strong leadership at all levels has worked well, to improve the quality of teaching and thereby raise achievement through a robust programme of monitoring. Senior leaders have a good understanding of how to secure further improvement and all staff are held to account for the standards pupils reach.
- There is an exciting and creative curriculum available to pupils that meets their needs and celebrates their backgrounds.
- Governors know the strengths of the school and provide good challenge to leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some children are not always given work that is suitably challenging and are not being moved on quickly to more difficult work; this can sometimes restrict their progress.
- The school is not always rigorous enough in the way it evaluates the additional support some pupils get to ensure the support helps them to improve quickly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons and made shorter visits to classes, hearing children read and observing support for small groups of children. Some of these lessons were jointly observed with the deputy headteacher, who then fed back to those teachers.
- The inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, the headteacher, several members of staff, including most senior leaders, and members of the governing body, and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the work children had done in their books while observing lessons and at other times.
- In addition, inspectors studied a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, teachers' planning, minutes of governors' meetings, the school's documentation recording the progress of pupils, information about the quality of teaching over time and safeguarding documentation.
- Inspectors talked to parents over the two days both inside and outside the school, and the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into account.

Inspection team

Martyn Kitson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children from service families, is below the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British but the numbers of pupils from other ethnic groups or having English as an additional language are in line with national averages.
- The proportions of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action, at school action plus, and through a statement of special educational needs are all below national averages.
- In 2012, the school exceeded the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a higher number than average of children entering the school at other than expected times, especially after Year 3.
- The school operates a breakfast club, an after-school club and a holiday club for the benefit of children attending Fairfield's Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are given work that is always at the right level for them so that they do not waste time on carrying out tasks that are too easy for them
 - ensuring that all pupils are promptly moved on to more challenging work when tasks are completed.
- Raise standards and increase the rate of progress by ensuring that the programmes that provide additional support for pupils are helping them to significantly improve their performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter the school, levels of attainment are at best as expected for this age group and for many lower than this. They are well provided for in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. At the end of the Foundation Stage, their level of development is average for English and mathematical skills but is above average for their personal development, as demonstrated by the detailed 'Learning Journeys' that the school keeps for each child.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress so that by the end of Year 2, they achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above national averages.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils continue to make strong progress in all subjects so that they achieve standards that are above average.
- All groups of pupils who benefit from pupil premium funding reach similar levels of attainment to other pupils in the school in both English and mathematics, as measured by their average points scores at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The funding is used to provide additional support through the use of additional teachers or teaching assistants, enabling these pupils to make similar progress to that of other pupils. However, this is not always rigorously checked to see how the support could be improved.
- Different groups of pupils make similarly good progress overall, including those from different ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language. However, those who are in the school for the whole of Key Stage 2 make more rapid progress than those who join the school during Key Stage 2.
- The vast majority of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs make progress in line with other pupils because of the effective support they receive.
- Year 2 children enjoy reading in school and at home and are keen to talk about their books. They read well through the use of a range of strategies, including their phonics skills, and know how important reading is.
- Year 6 pupils use 'WOW' words to make their writing more interesting and write effectively for different purposes, such as writing a letter of complaint or a spooky story. Pupils taking part in a sponsored silence for Red Nose Day were catered for through adjusted writing tasks.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress in developing important skills. For example, Year 6 pupils carry out mental calculations quickly and can think in terms of algebraic expressions, seeing patterns and generalising about what they mean.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching, resulting in most pupils making good progress.
- Since the last inspection, the school has worked to ensure that teachers know how well their pupils are doing and that their planning is based on this.
- Based on high expectations for learning and behaviour, teachers have established an environment in which pupils make good progress, whether working independently or as part of a group.
- Teachers use a range of strategies to help pupils learn. They model what they want pupils to do, promote discussions by pupils about their learning and link lessons to what pupils already know. In an English lesson, drama was used to develop important language and vocabulary, while in another lesson, quiet music was used to create a calm learning atmosphere.
- Teaching assistants provide strong support to individuals and groups through their focus on helping pupils learn. They also help to provide appropriate small-group support to those pupils who need it, although the success of these groups is not always rigorously monitored.
- Most pupils understand what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve.

Marking helps them with this through saying what they have done well and what they could do better. The quality of advice provided in marking is good overall, although better in English than in mathematics. Pupils evaluate their own work and that of others and work is usually well presented. Pupils' books show the good progress being made over time.

- Reception classes are taught in a stimulating and positive environment that means children are excited about learning.
- In some lessons, some pupils, often the more able, are given work that is too easy for them and they are not always moved on to work that further challenges them quickly enough. This limits the progress they make.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils behave well, with the few examples of challenging behaviour being managed well. They have a positive attitude towards their learning and are enthusiastic and well motivated at all times. In most lessons, pupils are focused on their work, although very occasionally there is some mild disruptive behaviour from a small number of pupils.
- Pupils are welcoming, courteous and polite, which results in the school being a happy, vibrant place that is conducive to learning, even on Red Nose Day!
- Lunchtime playground activities provide opportunities for pupils to play together, with quiet areas respected. Effective supervision ensures pupils are safe and happy. Assemblies, which often celebrate the children's own heritage, help to promote good behaviour and are enjoyed by all.
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying, is rare but when it does occur, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of this and of other forms of unacceptable behaviour; any such behaviour is also dealt with well by the school. Many pupils show great empathy in dealing with those pupils who need additional help and support.
- Parents and pupils agree that pupils behave well in school, are happy and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and unsafe situations and are confident in approaching an adult if they have concerns.
- There are effective strategies in place for dealing with attendance issues, ensuring that attendance is above average and that punctuality is good.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear leadership that has led to the recent improvements in the school, notably in teaching and in pupils' achievement. She is well supported by senior leaders, who understand their roles in raising achievement and have been given the opportunity to develop them.
- There is a rigorous programme to improve teaching, involving all senior leaders, focusing on identifying weaknesses and using peer coaching to help teachers improve.
- The school uses the Teachers' Standards in its performance management, with the link to pay recognised and professional development focusing on the needs of teachers and the school.
- There is a well-organised and collaboratively planned curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, as demonstrated by their good progress; in this respect, equality of opportunity is promoted well. However, the monitoring of additional support is not always rigorous enough in checking the extent to which such support is improving rates of progress.
- The curriculum also provides pupils with memorable experiences and helps them to achieve well in basic skills. A range of visits and visitors make the curriculum more interesting, supported by a variety of after-school provision.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through events such as multicultural weeks, the Rights, Respect, Responsibility programme and the use of interpreters

for non-English speaking families.

- Most parents are positive about their school, actively engage with it and appreciate what it does for their children. The school, with good support from the local authority, has effectively dealt with the issues from the last inspection and has demonstrated capacity for improvement.
 - The school successfully runs a breakfast, after-school and holiday club for Fairfield's pupils. Both pupils and their parents are very positive about this provision and value the additional opportunities it presents.
 - Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. All staff have undergone the required training and safeguarding checks. Careful site security helps to ensure pupil safety.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good knowledge of how pupils' achievement compares with national figures. They know where teaching is weak and how leaders are addressing this, and are aware of improvements in mathematics. They understand the performance management systems of the school and hold senior leaders to account for the performance of staff, including linking this to pay. There is a strong governor development programme that is accessed by all governors.
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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	116232
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	401579

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Giles Frances
Headteacher	Sue Davies
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 May 2010
Telephone number	01256 473886
Fax number	01256 330997
Email address	admin@fairfields.hants.sch.uk

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