

# Fairfield High School

Allfoxton Road, Bristol, BS7 9NL,

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides the school with outstanding leadership; she is supported well by other leaders.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The governing body holds senior leaders to account well.
- Students' achievement, behaviour and attendance, and the quality of teaching, have improved over the four years since the headteacher joined the school, and markedly in the last two years.
- Students' achievement is good overall and is outstanding in English. It has improved significantly in mathematics to be close to that in English. Achievement is also strong in a range of other subjects.
- A small proportion of teaching, particularly in science, requires improvement and inhibits the progress made by students in these lessons.
- Students' progress is monitored extremely carefully and well-targeted support is provided where necessary. In some subjects, the contact made with parents to support the progress of students, and to praise them when they do well, is outstanding.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school is extremely harmonious with students from a very wide range of backgrounds working well together and showing great respect for each other.
- The range of subjects offered is reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of students well and to improve attendance and behaviour and raise achievement.
- The school makes excellent use of a wide range of partnerships to support students' achievement and personal development.
- The school's involvement with the local and wider community is impressive.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students' achievements in some subjects, particularly in science, are not as good as in others.
- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement to raise students' achievements further.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 27 lessons, 11 jointly with the headteacher or another senior leader. Inspectors also conducted a number of student pursuits, following individuals and small groups of students over a sequence of lessons. In lessons, inspectors looked at the work of students and discussed their progress with them.
- Inspectors held meetings with three groups of students. They also used lunch and break times to hold informal discussions with many other students around the school to gather their views, particularly about how much the school has improved.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members, and a representative from the local authority.
- These meetings included discussions about school policies and procedures, the analysis of data and documented information, and records provided by the school, including records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and tracking students' progress. The lead inspector worked with the headteacher and an assistant headteacher to analyse the school's data on the progress being made currently by students in each year group, including boys and girls and those in different groups, such as those supported through the pupil premium and those with special educational needs.
- Meetings with senior leaders and with the governing body included discussion of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- Inspectors took account of the 106 responses to the on-line Parent View survey as well as the school's own surveys of the views of parents and students. Inspectors also took account of the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire, as well as gathering the views of staff through formal and informal discussions.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

## Inspection team

James Sage, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fran Ashworth

Additional Inspector

Terence Payne

Additional Inspector

John Taylor

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Fairfield High School is a smaller-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much higher than average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average.
- The overall proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for children looked after by the local authority, those eligible for free school meals and children whose parents are currently serving in the armed forces) is almost double the national average. Around half of the students in the school are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion whose first language is not English are both around three times the national average.
- A much larger than usual number of students enters the school during the school year and/or part way through their secondary education.
- The school deprivation indicator (a measure of the social and economic deprivation in the area served by the school) is much higher than average.
- Previous plans to convert to an academy stalled, but plans to form a trust with a local academy and partner primary schools are well under way, with the intention of the school becoming an academy before January 2014.
- Elmfield Secondary School for the Deaf is located within the school premises. While this is a separate school, many of the students attend lessons at Fairfield.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in science to raise students' achievement.
- Ensure that students' progress and the quality of teaching in all subjects are as good as that in the best by:
  - improving teachers' use of questioning to provide opportunities for all students to be involved in discussions, to probe their reasoning and understanding, and to develop key teaching points
  - improving the quality of the feedback to students and involving them more in assessing their progress and in determining how to improve their work
  - ensuring that teaching focuses more clearly on securing progress against the intended learning planned for the lesson.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students make at least good progress from starting points that are generally very low. The achievement of students has improved steadily for at least three years, and markedly in some subjects where achievement is now outstanding. Attainment has also risen to be in line with the national average.
- Students' achievement in English is outstanding. The proportions of students making and exceeding expected levels of progress are well above average.
- Students known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well and the gap in attainment between this group and other students is closing rapidly. Those eligible for free school meals attain at the same level as their classmates in English and are no more than half a grade behind in mathematics. They make more progress and attain at a higher level in English than the average nationally for students who are not eligible for free school meals.
- In mathematics, students' achievement has improved significantly, particularly for girls who had previously not made as much progress as boys. The proportions of students making and exceeding expected levels of progress are above average. Students known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress and attain at a level very close to the average for all students nationally.
- Students also do well in a range of other subjects, including geography, history, religious education, art and design, and design and technology. Their progress in science is not good enough, particularly in terms of the proportion who make more than the expected progress. Achievement is also weaker in dance and music.
- The overall achievement of all groups of students is now at least good. The progress made by girls has improved to be in line with that of boys. Students from different ethnic backgrounds do equally well; the achievement of Black African students has improved significantly. Those for whom English is an additional language progress well and develop secure language skills. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Many students enter the school with low levels of reading and writing. They make rapid improvement through focused support and well-planned attention to these aspects of their learning in many subjects. Their communication skills are often developed well; as shown, for example, in their confidence in speaking in French and the way mathematics teaching requires them to develop and explain their reasoning.
- The school's evaluation of the achievement of all groups of students and in all subjects is accurate. Evidence from inspectors' scrutiny of students' work and records of their progress over time, and from lesson observations, all agree with the school's evaluation.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Good and better teaching leads to the good and better progress of students in the humanities and other subjects identified earlier. Teaching in science and a small number of other subjects requires improvement and this inhibits the progress of some students.
- Senior leaders and most leaders in charge of subjects make accurate judgments of the quality of teaching based on evaluations of students' progress over time, from scrutiny of their work and from observations of teaching. Senior leaders' evaluations show that there have been marked improvements in the quality of teaching over the last two or three years; this is fully supported by the views of older students in the school. These improvements in the quality of teaching mean that additional or specialist support is targeted very well on those students who need it most.

- Many teachers have high expectations, show great enthusiasm for their subject and communicate this to students well. This was shown, for example, in the high levels of interest students showed in a history lesson about the Vietnam War and the quality of their discussions, their participation in a religious education lesson about Buddhism and in the high quality of their work in art.
- All teachers use questioning as a teaching strategy. In many lessons it is used well to involve all students and to probe and develop their understanding. Extremely high-quality questioning to develop students' mathematical reasoning was observed in two lessons. In weaker lessons, questioning is less well directed, does not involve all students fully or does not check their depth of understanding sufficiently. In a dance lesson, for example, discussions focused more on the completion of tasks than on the progress made against the objectives for the lesson.
- Students receive regular feedback on their work. Most students are clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. In English and humanities subjects, students review their own progress well and are fully involved in determining their 'next steps'. This good work is being developed across other subjects to improve practice where it is weaker.
- Students' skills in reading and writing are developed well across a wide range of subjects, as well as through 'ilearn' (the school's programme of personal, social and health education) and other activities. Those students that need it receive good additional help and support. In many lessons, students are given good opportunities to develop their communication skills through talking about the work, discussing their ideas and explaining these within groups and to the whole class; this is done particularly well in English and humanities subjects. Mathematics is taught well and students make good progress; the school is now working on how to develop numeracy skills more effectively across a range of other subjects.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students, parents and teachers are all clear that behaviour has improved significantly over time, and particularly in the last two years. Internal and fixed-term exclusions show a marked fall. Students feel very safe in the school, a view supported by those of their parents and teachers.
- There is an extremely positive ethos in the school. Students behave well, attend regularly, are punctual to lessons and show respect for each other and for adults. They move around the school with a sense of purpose and arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn.
- Students show great pride in their school. They are particularly proud of the way that students from many different backgrounds get on so well together; they readily acknowledge how well teachers help this by the way they make them interact with each other during lessons.
- Students mostly have very positive attitudes to their learning. They respond extremely well when teaching is lively and engaging. They generally behave well even when it is not. When they are given the opportunity, they work well in pairs and small groups to support each other's learning. There is occasionally some low-level disruption, but this is dealt with well and does not significantly inhibit the learning of others. Clear policies are applied consistently well to deal with any incidents.
- Students have a good awareness of all forms of bullying. There are occasional incidents of bullying, but these are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school is particularly effective in dealing with racist incidents and any homophobic bullying, although both are uncommon because of the extremely inclusive approach of the school and the excellent relationships fostered between students.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- Since the arrival of the headteacher in the school four years ago, there has been a steady improvement in the quality of teaching and students' achievement, behaviour and attendance.

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, significant changes have been made to senior and middle leadership, and to the school's policies, systems and procedures, and these improvements have become more marked. Leaders and the very large majority of teachers share a relentless drive to improve the school further. Older students are very complimentary about the improvements the headteacher has made.

- The school's judgements on the quality of its own work are extremely accurate. Senior leaders and governors are absolutely clear about where achievement, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management need to improve further.
  - Students' progress is checked frequently and rigorously; this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection and is contributing to the rising achievement. The quality of teaching is also checked carefully, particularly through the impact on students' progress. Most heads of faculty do this well, as do the achievement co-ordinators who have responsibility for particular year groups. In science, there is not enough focus on making the improvements in teaching required to secure improvements in students' achievement.
  - The arrangements for the performance management of teachers are robust and applied effectively. The analysis of the evaluations of teaching is used extremely well to determine the priorities for teachers' professional development at whole-school, subject and individual teacher level. These priorities are met well through a range of activities, including extensive use of a cyclical process of peer planning, observation and review. The marked improvements in the quality of teaching show the effectiveness of this programme. In most cases, individual support plans lead to an improvement in teaching. Salary progression is based on the quality of teaching, judged through its impact on students' achievement.
  - The curriculum meets students' needs and aspirations well; this contributes to the improvements in achievement, behaviour and attendance. It is constantly reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the extremely diverse school population. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is adjusted each year to provide as close a match as possible to what students need; for example, a wide range of languages is offered. The school provides good enrichment activities, but also works with students through their involvement in many cultural, performance and other activities within the local community.
  - The outstanding promotion of all aspects of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates the life of the school and creates an extremely harmonious and cohesive learning community where all thrive. Students are given a wide range of opportunities to broaden their understanding through visits and numerous activities within the community.
  - The additional funding the school receives through the pupil premium is used very well to raise the achievement of these students. The impact of the use of this funding is very carefully checked. The progress and attainment of these students are outstanding in English, and improving rapidly in mathematics to be close to that in English. The funding also contributes to the rapid gains in reading and writing for many students in early Key Stage 3. It is also used to ensure that no students are excluded from the range of activities that contribute to their all-round personal development and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
  - The school makes highly effective use of a wide range of partnerships to, for example, raise the achievement of girls in mathematics, to raise the achievement of Black African students and to support the most vulnerable students in the school. The school makes extensive and successful efforts to ensure that as many parents as possible are involved in the life of the school and support the achievement of their children. In mathematics, for example, but also in other subjects, the head of faculty and other teachers make contact with a number of different parents every week to give praise for the work of students or to work with parents to support better achievement.
  - The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meet statutory requirements.
  - Much of the recent improvement in the school is due to the headteacher and other senior leaders, rather than to the support provided by the local authority. The headteacher set the high expectations that have driven the school's improvement. Prior to the appointment of the current headteacher, the local authority became aware that the school was in decline, that the school's
-

budget was heading for a large deficit and that action needed to be taken. An interim headteacher, supported by an executive headteacher, led the school for one year. On arrival at the school, the current headteacher rapidly identified significant key concerns and asked the local authority for help; some was forthcoming, including funding for one year, an additional deputy headteacher. The headteacher had support in resolving serious financial issues, but less in dealing with personnel issues with non-teaching staff. The support provided initially by the local authority and then through an external consultant has not had the impact required to improve the quality of teaching in science. The school improvement officer has given the headteacher useful support and guidance. The local authority governor development service has been helpful in ensuring that the significantly changed governing body has the skills to both support and hold the headteacher to account.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance of the school is good. There have been extensive recent changes to the governing body. The Chair has been in role for about sixth months and many governors joined within the last four months. In a short period of time the governing body has developed the skills and understanding to challenge the school's senior leaders and hold them to account well; for example, in evaluating the achievements of students overall and for specific groups, and challenging the school over plans to significantly change the structure of the school day. Governors know the school well and have a secure understanding of the quality of teaching. They support the headteacher in ensuring the efficient management of financial and other resources, including the use of funding through the pupil premium. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109290
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol
<b>Inspection number</b>	422533

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Community School
<b>School category</b>	Secondary
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	687
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matt Hempstock
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catriona Mangham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01179 527100
<b>Fax number</b>	01179527168
<b>Email address</b>	admin@fairfield.bristol.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

