

Fairfield First School

Stourbridge Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, B61 9LZ

Inspection dates 11–12 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher's positive approach to school development and improvement has created a vibrant and stimulating ethos for learning. He is strongly supported by the assistant headteachers, subject leaders, other staff and governors in ensuring good teaching and achievement throughout the school.
- The governing body has improved its contribution to the management of the school significantly since the last inspection. It shares the ambitions of school leaders and is not afraid to challenge them about the school's performance and improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they have exemplary attitudes to their learning. They are respectful and caring towards each other, and confident that adults will keep them safe at all times. The provision for their care and safety is also exemplary.
- Teaching throughout the school is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and excellent relationships with pupils. They provide pupils with an exciting range of learning opportunities to widen their skills and knowledge, and pupils enjoy their learning.
- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils attain above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and continue to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics until they leave the school.
- Children have an excellent start to their education in the Reception year. They learn quickly and confidently because teaching and the management of the class are outstanding.
- The school benefits from its several partnerships with other local schools on its journey of improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always provide work that is challenging for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' presentation is not always of the highest quality.
- The school's development plan is not specific enough in setting targets and outcomes for improvement priorities, or in how leaders will evaluate the effectiveness of action taken.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils learning in nine lessons. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, other staff with leadership responsibilities and nine governors. The inspector also spoke to the school's improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspector discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- The inspector took account of 30 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. He also examined the school's own recent survey of parents' views, and one letter received from a parent.
- The inspector considered the 19 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire from staff.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation and development plans; an analysis of pupils' achievement and progress; safeguarding arrangements; policies and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Children in the Reception Year attend the school full time. There are three other mixed-aged classes: Years 1/2; Years 2/3; and Years 3/4.
- The school has extensive links to other schools in the Bromsgrove area.
- The school provides a number of out-of-school activities and sports clubs.
- A privately run before- and after-school club, 'Little Gems', is located on the school site, but was not part of this inspection.
- The school has recently added a large new hall extension to its facilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make rapid progress by:
 - making sure that the work set is sufficiently varied to challenge pupils of all abilities
 - checking the presentation of pupils' work thoroughly so that careless errors are avoided and presentation is maintained at the highest levels.
- Revise the school development plan by:
 - setting specific targets for school improvement
 - setting deadlines for reaching the targets set with criteria for success so that leaders and the governing body can evaluate how well priorities are achieved
 - using the findings from the evaluation of progress in reaching targets to secure even more rapid improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has very effectively communicated the school's high ambitions to staff so that they can give pupils the best possible education. He has skilfully created a strong ethos for continual improvement in teaching, learning and excellent behaviour across the school. This strong sense of purpose is shared with a thoughtful and creative team of senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff. Consequently, all work closely and harmoniously together for the benefit of pupils.
- The leadership and management of the early years ensure children receive outstanding teaching in a welcoming and stimulating environment. As a result, they are well prepared for continued success in the main school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning rigorously. They use their findings on teaching quality to support improvement in teachers' practice. Leaders have rightly concluded that teaching and learning have to be at even higher levels if the school is to become outstanding.
- Leaders have introduced better ways of checking of pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers' understanding of the next steps in pupils' learning is helping to ensure pupils' good achievement.
- Leaders have good skills in leading improvement. For example, attainment and progress in mathematics, especially of most-able pupils, have improved as a result of recent initiatives. The careful and effective introduction of the new curriculum has improved progress in a number of subjects, especially through the wider application and practising of literacy skills.
- The school has a detailed and extensive development plan. However, the plan's targets are not specific enough and it does not identify the time by which improvement targets should be reached, or give precise criteria by which leaders will evaluate success.
- The revised curriculum has had a positive impact upon the strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum places emphasis on the promotion of British values and prepares pupils well for life in modern democratic society. For example, leaders ensure that pupils learn tolerance of each other and of those with beliefs different from their own. Studying British history and the development of citizenship are helpful to pupils' understanding of modern British society.
- The additional primary school physical education and sport funding encourages much greater interest by pupils in sport and competition with other schools. For example, during the inspection pupils were thrilled to reach the semi-finals of a netball competition against several much larger local schools. The use of specialist sports coaches is improving the teaching skills of staff in the school. The greater involvement of pupils in sport is benefiting their health and physical well-being.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. The school tolerates no discrimination. Consequently, relationships across the school are excellent and all pupils have equal access to the varied activities provided, including all after-school activities and sports clubs. Pupils are hard working, respectful and proud of their achievements.
- Leaders ensure the school gains from regular contacts and partnerships with other schools. Joint working with staff in the two neighbouring first schools is particularly effective in sharing ideas during planning, in the evaluation of pupils' performance and in the moderation of assessments of their work.
- The school works effectively with the local authority, and appreciates the guidance offered through annual reviews. The school's performance and leadership are well regarded by the authority. The authority has been particularly supportive in developing the local partnerships of schools.
- Leaders, including governors, make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. The safety and security of pupils are under constant review. Leaders have introduced strategies to identify and

deal with any extremism or radicalisation should they arise. The Chair of the Governing Body and the headteacher have attended training in the government's *Prevent* strategy. All school policies, especially those for child protection, are regularly monitored and fully applied.

- Leaders, including governors, monitor the spending of the funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully. They compare these pupils' progress with that of other pupils, and analyse how any gaps are closing between the performance of these pupils and others.
- Virtually all parents are, rightly, positive about the school in all aspects, and would enthusiastically recommend it to others.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are fully involved in the work of the school. They work closely with leaders and regularly visit the school, including classroom sessions. Their reviews of visits are presented to the whole governing body. As a result, governors have a good knowledge of the school's performance and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Actively led, the governing body has gained in confidence in challenging school leaders. For example, governors have questioned leaders robustly about the performance of the most-able pupils.
- Effective in-house training, sometimes with staff, and training through the local authority governor services have helped governors in their developing knowledge of their responsibilities.
- The governing body's good knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school is used effectively to guide decisions on pay increases for teachers. These are based upon the performance targets set for them to reach, as shown by pupils' progress and attainment. Governors now have a good understanding of data relating to pupils' attainment and progress following extensive training.
- In line with its close monitoring of the budget, the governing body is fully involved in the allocation of the additional funding, and the evaluation of its effective use and impact on pupils' learning opportunities and well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils have highly positive attitudes to all their learning, and greatly enjoy the variety and challenge of the new curriculum. They name numerous activities which they enjoy in school including, dance, drama in mathematics, playing in the brass band, street dancing and in the Reception class 'writing words'. They work very well together in classes with mixed year groups, individually and in small and large groups.
- Pupils always settle into their work quickly with no fuss. They work at a good pace and are confident in asking for adult guidance when stuck. They enjoy school outings, such as trips to Warwick Castle and Hanbury Hall because, as they explained, 'It's always to do with what we are learning in school.'
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and in all parts of the school is excellent. Children in the Reception class always come into main school quietly from their classroom in the playground, and have enthusiastic attitudes to their learning. When pupils are out in the community, their behaviour is impeccable. A visit by the choir to the local harvest festival was commended by the organiser, saying: 'They brought the church alive, their reading was faultless, and they helped to bring the community together.'
- Pupils themselves report no bad behaviour. They fully understand the schools' expectations of behaviour, mentioning orange and purple cards, and the behaviour 'Zone Boards'. They much prefer to get the headteacher's Gold Award for good behaviour.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education and benefit from visits to their future schools for familiarisation sessions.
- Attendance has been consistently high since the last inspection. Pupils' punctuality is excellent, in spite of occasional local traffic problems for those who come by road.

- All parental and staff responses to Ofsted questionnaires confirm inspection findings that behaviour is well managed by the school. No pupil has been excluded from school in recent years.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are fully confident in the adults in the school, and are sure they will good care of them. Excellent relationships across the whole of the school community help pupils to be caring and friendly towards each other, and polite and respectful to adults.
- The school is vigilant over incidents relating to the health and safety of pupils. Actions taken over the very small number of incidents are recorded very carefully to ensure positive outcomes for the pupils involved.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, mainly that of name-calling in this school. Only one such incident has been recorded in several years, and pupils recall no other occurrences. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a knowledge of cyber-bullying and being safe when using the internet. The school encourages parents to be vigilant in this aspect.
- Checks are made on staff during recruitment and all risk assessments are checked rigorously by the headteacher and administrative staff. The school is fully inclusive and there are no records or recollections by pupils of racist or homophobic comments.
- Responses from parents, carers and staff were unanimous in declaring that pupils are safe in the school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. In the Reception class, teaching is outstanding. Teachers are especially proficient at planning the learning for pupils in classes with two different year groups.
- Teaching and learning are regularly reviewed by senior staff, in particular the headteacher, who frequently checks teaching quality jointly with subject leaders. This action contributes positively to the ongoing development of teachers' skills. However, school leaders rightly recognise that consistently outstanding teaching would accelerate pupils' progress and achievement, but have not yet improved practice to that extent.
- Much improved checks on pupils' progress, introduced by the headteacher, have led to a greater understanding by teachers of the learning needs of their pupils. This has had a positive effect on raising pupils' achievement.
- Consistently good and occasionally better teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is leading to above-average attainment and good progress by pupils in these skills. Teachers have high expectations and have successfully introduced the new national curriculum since last September.
- The new curricular content is leading to good gains in learning, especially of some aspects of British life, history and culture. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good strides in their learning about the Second World War; they have extensive knowledge of the blitz, evacuees and the effects of war upon civilians. In addition, their understanding of life in Victorian times and how it contrasts with, but also affects, the way we live now has enhanced their learning strongly.
- Teachers stress the development of British social and political values in all classes. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 studied pictures of Queen Elizabeth I being carried by courtiers in a litter, and were able to compare this to present-day attitudes to royalty. Curiosity and enjoyment are ever present in their learning.
- Pupils' learning is helped by teachers' effective marking. As well as supportive comments, pupils appreciate the guidance they receive, such as 'pink for think', which helps them to identify good work, and

what needs improvement. However, teachers do not always vary activities sufficiently for the different abilities of their pupils, and are inconsistent in following up weaknesses in pupils' presentation of work.

- Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are excellent and are a big factor in the development of pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning. All teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils' excellent speaking and listening.
- Teaching assistants work very effectively with teachers and make significant contributions to the learning of all pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit particularly from their support.
- Teachers promote literacy and numeracy strongly through the new curriculum. For example, pupils are given many opportunities to write and speak in history, geography and religious education. They develop numeracy skills well in information and communication technology (ICT), science and geography. They are also able to link their health education to their learning of French terminology for different healthy foods.
- Responses from parents are unanimous in endorsing teaching in the school as good and that, as a result, their children make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment since the last inspection has been consistently strong. Most pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 with attainment ahead of what is usually found at that age in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been above average in three of the last four years.
- Children enter the early years provision with skills typical for their age and make excellent progress. Pupils make good progress from Years 1 to 4, and a few make outstanding progress. However, their achievement is not outstanding because teaching does not always challenge them to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Evidence during the inspection indicates that more pupils are currently reaching higher levels and that achievement is rising throughout the school. This is shown in pupils' current attainment in mathematics, which has been a target for improvement in the last year. Higher standards in mathematics, guided by more challenging teaching, are clearly evident in pupils' work and in what they are doing in lessons. This improvement is also confirmed by the school's regular assessment data for all classes.
- Pupils' achievement has benefited strongly from the much improved and more detailed and accurate measures of their progress. The checking process, led by the headteacher, combined with continuous monitoring of learning, gives teachers more accurate and immediate data on pupils' progress. Consequently, their teaching has been better directed to ensure pupils of all abilities learn more successfully.
- Achievement is consistently good for all groups of pupils in both key stages in many of the wide range of subjects offered by the school. These include ICT, music, art, and especially physical education and sports. The latter two subjects have gained considerable benefits from the primary sport premium funding, which has been used successfully to give greater opportunities for pupils to develop their skills.
- Most-able pupils achieve well. They have benefited in the last two years from the more extensive and challenging curriculum. At the end of Year 2 in 2014, the attainment of the most-able pupils was ahead of national performance. When they leave at the end of Year 4, a greater proportion of these pupils is working at higher levels than in the past.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in all year groups. This is because staff carefully plan and constantly review learning in order to fit the particular needs of these pupils.
- For several years there have been very few disadvantaged pupils and it is not possible to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying them. Their progress is usually good and similar to that of

others in the school. Gaps in attainment between them and other pupils have varied across year groups because of the very small numbers and, currently, there is no attainment gap.

- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and like to share their reading and opinions of books with adults, including family members. Their reading is helped by their good understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), which was above the nationally expected level in the latest Year 1 phonics check in 2014. Pupils in Year 4 have knowledge of Charles Dickens and the works of Shakespeare such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. Their home-reading diaries are very well kept indicating good dialogue between parents and carers, their children and the school.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and experience typically seen at their age. They make rapid progress, especially in their speaking, listening and writing, because teaching is outstanding. Their achievement is outstanding in all areas of their learning, and staff prepare them very effectively for transition into Key Stage 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are outstanding. Meticulous planning and observation of children at work and play enable staff to have highly detailed knowledge of children's progress and their learning needs. Staff meet these very well.
- Leaders ensure that children have many varied, exciting and challenging learning experiences. These contribute strongly to children's attainment in all areas of their learning. As a result, they attain above the national expectations by the time they enter Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is consistently outstanding. The two teachers and teaching assistant work very closely to ensure that they have a shared understanding of each child's progression in learning. The variety of activities provided, combined with children's rapid development of key skills, enables them to acquire great self-confidence and understanding in their learning.
- Children talk confidently in both formal and informal situations to each other and to adults. They develop fierce concentration when practising and developing their joined handwriting skills. In the Forest School, they work closely and with great imagination on their journeys of discovery in that area.
- The learning environment is creative and stimulating in the classroom. Children also learn effectively in a small outside area. This area is due for renovation to make it more stimulating as a learning environment so that children's learning is even better.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding in the early years because they have excellent attitudes to their learning. They cannot wait to start their activities, and have a highly developed understanding of what is expected of them in all learning environments. This was seen in their immaculate behaviour in an assembly about Mothering Sunday, when several confidently offered their answers and opinions to the whole school.
- Children's health, safety and well-being are high priority for the staff. The staff ensure that the management of the safeguarding of children fully meets all statutory requirements.
- Staff work very closely with parents and carers who express strong approval of their children's progress and personal development in the school. Staff also work effectively with pre-school providers, which helps children settle rapidly in the Reception year.

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	116675
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	448488

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Emily Godfrey
Headteacher	Scott Smith
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2009
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