

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Andrew De Silva
Headteacher
Fair Oak Junior School
Botley Road
Fair Oak
Eastleigh
Hampshire
SO50 7AN

Dear Mr De Silva

Short inspection of Fair Oak Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 3 July 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Since taking up your role two years ago, you have led effectively with optimism and determination. You are ably supported by your deputy, governors and other leaders. Leaders work productively with each other to raise further the quality of teaching and learning. They do this well because you have created a vivid, shared vision of learning at Fair Oak Junior School.

Underpinning this vision is a set of compelling values that you have introduced to the school. You have identified what you believe to be the most crucial among them, which is that all staff must have the highest expectations of all pupils. Your fundamental aim has been to provide your pupils with outstanding learning opportunities. Your staff, because of this approach, successfully deliver a curriculum that is focused on learning experiences that balance academic learning with pupils' social and emotional development.

Since the last inspection, you and your team have addressed the areas for improvement. In particular, you have worked together to revitalise teaching and learning throughout the school. You have introduced several initiatives to improve rates of progress for pupils. Key developments have been the new approaches to mathematics and English learning. These innovations have had a positive effect on the progress that pupils are now making, especially within mathematics for Years 3 and 4.

You have introduced a rich raft of activities to foster pupils' deep understanding of diversity. An example of the ambitious and bold approach you have taken is the week-

long visit of pupils from China to Fair Oak Junior School. Observing the activities laid on for the visitors, I was able to see at first hand the commitment that you have made to opening a door onto the world for your pupils. This example is typical of the school's efforts to widen pupils' horizons.

You have adapted the learning environment at the school so that pupils' interest and imagination are captured. The 'Corridor of Curiosity' exemplifies the approach that staff have taken. Pupils relish the objects to discover. They also welcome the invitation to learn more. Every effort is made to provide pupils with engaging and stimulating resources to foster their curiosity. Pupils value the opportunities that are provided to broaden their learning, describing their teachers as 'amazing' and the school as 'fun and unique'.

Pupils are happy at school. They describe the school as 'completely and utterly phenomenal,' which conveys well the enjoyment that they take in their learning. Pupils of all ages can talk in detail about what they learn and how they are improving. They embrace challenges in their learning and often help each other to solve problems. They rarely lose their concentration in class. This is partly because the activities are so stimulating and partly because they have such a positive attitude towards their learning.

Pupils' behaviour at the school is of a very high standard. They take on board the school's focus on manners. They are always polite and courteous. They respect each other and work supportively together in class. Pupils are very aware of the importance of accepting difference. In their school, they are clear that everyone is treated equally, regardless of their circumstances. Pupils' well-developed attitudes towards equality and fairness are underpinned by the open-minded ethos you have created at the school.

Parents and carers, too, are very happy with the education that their children receive. Typical of their comments about the school is the following view expressed by one parent: 'This is a superb school. The teaching is first class, with staff going beyond the call of duty to ensure a fulfilling and enriching education.'

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff are fully committed in their work to keep pupils safe. Policies and procedures are kept up to date and shared with staff on a regular basis so that all are clear about how to respond to any safeguarding concerns. School leaders act quickly to any referral. They work effectively with a range of agencies in their efforts to meet the needs of their pupils. Leaders are determined in their support for children and are persistent when they need to escalate concerns.

Pupils feel safe in the school and can readily describe the ways in which the school helps them to keep safe. For instance, pupils can explain with confidence the 'Zip it, block it, flag it' strategy for keeping themselves safe online. They are adamant that bullying is rare and swiftly resolved if it happens. Pupils know that that they can seek help from the adults in the school. They consistently refer to their experience at school as 'fun and safe'.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including: how well leaders have ensured that teaching meets the needs of all pupils; how leaders ensure that pupils make strong progress in writing and mathematics; and whether the wider curriculum is meeting pupils' needs, particularly in relation to their knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Much has been put in place, over the past year especially, to raise further the quality of teaching in the school. School leaders have worked together to ensure that careful and targeted assessment of pupils' progress in their learning takes place. This, in turn, informs teachers' planning. Through this tightly sequenced approach, pupils of all abilities benefit from activities that build on their previous learning. This year, you and your staff have reviewed how you group pupils when they learn. You have done this because you have wanted to increase the contact and connection that the class teacher has with all his or her pupils. Staff have welcomed this change and believe that so far, it has supported greater understanding of their pupils' progress and learning needs. The school's assessment data indicates that this year, more pupils have made the progress that the school expects.
- Last year, while pupils' attainment was still above average, their rates of progress in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were below the average rates for these subjects. School leaders have reacted swiftly to this dip. The mathematics leader has introduced a range of initiatives that focus on improving and strengthening pupils' understanding of mathematics. The teaching methodology has been reviewed in Years 3 and 4. Pupils in these year groups are now showing greater confidence and independence in their mathematics learning. They can grasp concepts more quickly and securely because of the variety of methods available to them. Leaders have decided to introduce the revised teaching approach into Year 5 in September and into Year 6 in the following year.
- In writing, pupils have benefited from a more challenging set of texts than previously to stimulate their imagination as well as from greater opportunities to explore their ideas in written form. Pupils, this year, have developed their editing skills further. They are increasingly adept at extending and refining their writing.
- There have been many changes to the way that the school has delivered teaching and learning since the last inspection. A fundamental aspect of these changes has been the way that the curriculum has been shaped and delivered. You and your staff have ensured that more and more opportunities are offered to the pupils to extend their learning beyond the classroom. There are many and varied activities that pupils eagerly take up. They speak with enjoyment about their experiences. Because of the commitment you and your staff have towards helping your pupils to become global citizens, you have fashioned a curriculum that helps them explore their ideas about the world. For instance, in Year 4, pupils are engaged in answering the question, 'How does diversity impact on community?'. They explore this question through their study of history, geography, religious studies and literature. This approach is typical of the integrated curriculum that has been devised for the pupils. Nevertheless, it is not clear how pupils' learning is logically and progressively sequenced across subjects and

years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the improvements made to learning in mathematics in the lower years are extended into all year groups
- there is logical and sequential progression in the programmes to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Yasmin Maskatiya
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I held meetings with you, senior leaders and governors, including the chair and the vice-chair of the governing body. I visited classes in all year groups with you and the deputy headteacher. I met with a group of pupils from Years 3 to 6 to hear their views of the school and talk about their work. Alongside school leaders, I scrutinised a wide range of work in pupils' books. I considered 99 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 73 written comments. I also spoke directly to some parents at the start of the school day. I considered 37 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. I analysed a range of documentation, including information about safeguarding, the work of governors and your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.