

Inspection of a good school: Fairfield School

White Lee Road, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 8AS

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 June 2022

Outcome

Fairfield School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders ensure that Fairfield School is a place that always 'embraces uniqueness'. All pupils, from children in early years to post-16 students, experience a relevant curriculum that meets their individual needs. The teaching of communication is prioritised in lessons. Pupils are well taught by passionate teachers that care about meeting the academic needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Expectations of pupils are high. Around school are a variety of well-trained staff to support pupils. This includes specialist staff to support pupils' medical needs. The school has a range of specialist therapeutic facilities and sensory interventions that pupils use throughout the day. There is a large sensory garden to ensure pupils learn about creatures in the wild and experience the world around them. Pupils can access the 'sensory pod' with a range of learning activities and immersive experiences. Pupils are able to use well-thought-out intervention spaces to support personal learning.

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Staff know pupils very well. As a result, pupils feel safe. Staff support pupils consistently and confidently. This means pupils behave well. Bullying is not a concern, but leaders remain alert. There is a high staff ratio to support pupils at all times and classes are small.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured there is a full and appropriate curriculum in place. It is well planned and sequenced. It builds knowledge and skills over time. Learning is revisited often. Pupils spoke about 'recap' featuring as part of lessons. The curriculum is ambitious and relevant to pupils' needs. Most pupils are not ready for the national curriculum and follow a personalised curriculum. It is assessed using the engagement model. This is for pupils working below the level of the national curriculum. Those that can access elements of the national curriculum, do so. However, in some subjects, the formal curriculum is less well developed. Not all staff fully understand the curriculum in relation to their subject.

Lessons are skilfully delivered by well-trained staff. Some teachers need more subject-specific training to support personal, social and health education (PSHE). Leaders are aware of this. Around school, teachers present subject matter clearly and in an accessible way. Learning is revisited and lessons are taught in context to help pupils to understand its relevance. Teachers and support staff check understanding often.

Pupils achieve well. Assessment of pupils' work shows that they make progress. Leaders have worked to embed the assessment system. There are systems of moderation, peer challenge and teacher support that underpin its use. However, there is further work to do. Some new leaders of subjects do not fully understand what progress in their subject looks like in relation to their pupils' needs.

Around school are dedicated therapeutic areas and intervention spaces. These include a hydrotherapy pool, trampoline space, calm zones and a well-used sensory garden. There has been investment in the school to make it a comforting place to be and one that meets pupils' complex needs.

Reading has a high profile across the school. It is taught in a consistent way that builds phonics knowledge and skills. Leaders have ensured there are a range of reading resources available that can be used to support reading. Staff are trained to teach phonics to pupils with complex SEND. Pupils read often, or experience books often if they are not able to read themselves.

In early years, reading, rhymes and songs feature in lessons. During inspection, pupils were clearly excited when their favourite story was read. Teachers demonstrate skill in engaging pupils to ensure they associate a word with an action or object. Across age groups, reading and literacy feature in many forms to support communication. Activities on interactive boards and in immersive spaces provide additional opportunities for pupils to practise reading. These routines are embedded.

Post-16 students experience a curriculum that leads to qualifications supporting the development of personal, social and employability skills. A large part of the school's work is preparing students for adulthood. As a result, some post-16 students have secured jobs in the community and with national employers.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Around the school and in lessons, behaviour is good. If pupils become dysregulated, staff know what to do. Pupils support each other. There are no reported incidents of bullying in school. There is a high staff ratio to respond promptly if negativity occurs. Pupils are expected to attend well. Unusual patterns of attendance are acted on promptly. Unauthorised absence is very low. Absences are often due to pupils' medical needs.

Leaders ensure pupils experience a range of experiences and opportunities, particularly to support them into adulthood. The school meets the Baker clause and has met all Gatsby measures for good careers guidance. Pupils experience opportunities to maintain healthy lifestyles through activities in school such as swimming and after-school sports clubs supported by a national football club.

Staff do not report issues of excessive workload. Staff believe that leaders' expectations are realistic. Staff say that leaders listen to them. They feel supported by leaders in their work. Staff believe leaders are working to make well-being improvements that have a positive impact on them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed secure systems to ensure there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Record-keeping is comprehensive. Staff receive regular updates and safeguarding training provided by the local authority. Staff understand the risks pupils face in the community. Members of staff have received training on preventing radicalisation and child sexual exploitation. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report any concerns. Leaders insist that any safeguarding concern is reported promptly within a strict 15-minute timeframe. Staff understand the relationship between safeguarding and pupils' SEND vulnerabilities. Pupils' intimate care needs are well planned for as a result. There is a high ratio of staff that ensures pupils are safe and well supervised at all times.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subject leaders fully understand the formal pathway curriculum offer. This means that, in some subject areas, leaders have not adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of those pupils that may be able to progress to a more formal curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the formal pathway is understood by all staff, so that the curriculum can be adapted to meet the needs of those pupils who may progress to this.
- The school assessment system is not fully embedded in all subject areas. This means that, in some subject areas, leaders cannot measure pupil progress fully. Leaders should ensure that the assessment system meets the needs of all subject areas to track pupil progress fully.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 12 and 13 March 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	107802
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10200353
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	4 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tony Pruchniewicz
Headteacher	John Page
Website	www.fairfieldschool.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Fairfield School is a special school for pupils aged between four and 19 years. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school is a member of The Spensborough Co-operative Trust.
- The school makes provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairments, physical disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, teachers and some non-teaching staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the school's local governing body.

- The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. Here, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector met with the school's designated safeguarding lead. He reviewed the school's safeguarding records, relevant policies and other safeguarding documentation. The lead inspector also reviewed the processes leaders use to identify and help pupils who need support. In addition, the lead inspector scrutinised the school's records of checks carried out on adults who work at the school.
- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, as well as activities at the start and end of the day.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally, including pupils who receive support to improve their reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors took into account the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils, and the online Parent View survey for parents.

Inspection team

David Mills, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Penny

Ofsted Inspector

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