

Inspection of Fairfield High School for Girls

Fairfield Avenue, Droylsden, Manchester M43 6AB

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

This school was last inspected 9 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve exceptionally well academically because they access a well-designed curriculum that is delivered very effectively. Leaders have incredibly high expectations of pupils' academic achievement. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who shared their views said that their child does well at this school.

Most pupils feel safe and happy in school. They understand that leaders have high expectations of most aspects of their behaviour. The majority of pupils meet these expectations, which means that learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils are consistently well mannered and respectful towards adults. Leaders deal with most bullying well when it happens.

Leaders at all levels have a shared vision of the 'Fairfield girl' that they want pupils to become. They give careful thought to the experiences that they can provide to raise pupils' aspirations. For example, Year 8 pupils take part in an 'inspiring women' event. Pupils have opportunities to take positions of responsibility, such as being part of the head girl team or the Fairfield Forum Leadership Group. These experiences help to prepare pupils well for further education, training and/or employment when they leave school.

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

Leaders have created a learning environment characterised by ambition. They are committed to addressing social disadvantage by supporting pupils to achieve academically. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils leave school with the qualifications that they need to succeed.

Subject leaders have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to know. They have organised it carefully, which helps pupils to build their knowledge over time. Teachers are experts in their subjects. They explain important concepts clearly. Pupils develop rich subject knowledge.

Leaders have recently made changes to how teachers check pupils' learning in key stage 3. These changes have helped teachers to focus sharply on identifying pupils' misconceptions and any gaps in their learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have a robust approach to identifying pupils who are behind in their reading. Expert teachers provide a range of support to meet the needs of each pupil. This helps pupils to catch up quickly. Leaders have developed strategies to promote a love of reading among pupils. These include choral reading and events designed to immerse pupils in the world of a particular story. These dynamic experiences help to encourage pupils to read widely.

Leaders and teachers provide excellent support for pupils with SEND. Pupils' needs are quickly identified. Teachers receive detailed information about how to adapt their delivery of the curriculum to help these pupils to learn well. Teachers use these strategies effectively. As a result, pupils with SEND know and remember more over time.

The school environment is calm and orderly. Pupils successfully manage their own behaviour as they move around the building. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. However, some groups of pupils, including those with SEND, do not attend school as often as they should. As a result, they do not fully benefit from the high-quality education available to them.

Leaders have created a personal development curriculum which includes teaching pupils about human rights and how to stay safe in an age-appropriate way. Pupils have access to a strong careers programme. They are provided with a wealth of information which means that they are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders at all levels strive to create a culture of inclusivity. Pupils learn about the protected characteristics. However, some pupils use discriminatory language and leaders do not deal with this consistently well. As a result, some pupils do not feel confident about reporting the use of such language.

Leaders constantly reflect on how to improve the quality of education that they provide. Trustees hold leaders to account. Most staff appreciate the support that leaders give them to manage their workload. Staff enjoy working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff are well trained to enable them to identify pupils who might be at risk of harm. Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work well with external agencies to provide the necessary support to pupils who need it. They are proactive in identifying areas of concern and developing the capacity in school to support pupils, most recently around mental health. Leaders use the personal development curriculum to teach pupils about how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about the dangers of drug misuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some groups of pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not attend school as often as they should. Therefore, they miss learning and do not fully experience all that the school has to offer. Leaders should take effective action to improve the attendance of pupils, including those with SEND.
- Leaders do not have a sufficiently robust approach to dealing with discriminatory language. This undermines the culture of inclusivity that they aim to create. Leaders should ensure that they have systems in place to deal with discriminatory language effectively so that differences are respected and, where they are not, pupils have confidence that this will be addressed.

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.

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	136593
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10245231
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	985
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Bev Worthington
Headteacher	Stephanie Bateman
Website	www.fairfieldhigh.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 to 24 January 2013 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and representatives of the trust. An inspector held a telephone call with representatives of the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, English, geography, modern foreign languages and music. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, records of governing body minutes and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the responses shared through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sanjay Patel	Ofsted Inspector
Scott Maclean	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Greenough	Ofsted Inspector

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