

# Inspection of a good school: Fairfield High School

Allfoxton Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 9NL

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

## Outcome

Fairfield High School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe. They feel that that staff are caring and respectful and ambitious for their futures. Parents say this too. In response to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, parents typically described it as a nurturing school that prepares pupils to be good citizens.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and conduct. As a result, the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Staff are quick to challenge any form of disrespectful behaviour or bullying. Pupils and parents appreciate this and have confidence in leaders to resolve any issues.

Pupils feel that they have a voice in the school. They enjoy opportunities to be leaders themselves. For example, pupils say they want to help build their peers' awareness of how to prevent, and keep safe from, harmful sexual behaviour. Leaders listen to pupils' ideas and act together to tackle this important issue.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and activities that develop their talents and interests. For instance, pupils speak with enthusiasm about drama productions, languages clubs and equalities societies. Leaders ensure that these extra-curricular opportunities are open to all pupils.

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

Leaders have an ambitious vision for the quality of education that all pupils receive. They are determined that pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.

Leaders have carefully planned what pupils learn and when. This means that pupils build successfully on what they already know and can do. Teaching presents new information clearly. Teachers use assessment effectively to remedy pupils' misconceptions and to inform future planning. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the

curriculum well. Leaders evaluate the curriculum regularly and provide ongoing support for teachers to further develop their expertise.

Leaders identify pupils who need support to improve their reading. However, the curriculum for pupils still in the early stages of learning to read is not effective enough. It does not set out clearly the phonic knowledge that pupils need to read accurately. Books are not well matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read confidently.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well cared for and develop their independence. Leaders provide information to teachers so that teaching can be adapted appropriately. Pupils who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision) receive the support they need.

The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, their studies in religious education help them engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own. Pupils learn about protected characteristics and the importance of tolerance. The curriculum also helps pupils to develop an understanding of healthy relationships appropriate to their age. Leaders carefully respond to local and national trends. For example, they recognised the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pupils' well-being. As a result, they place a strong emphasis on supporting pupils' mental health.

Pupils receive useful careers information, advice and guidance. They undertake meaningful work experience and have encounters with a range of employers.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders support their workload and well-being. Local governors know the school well. Their support and challenge to leaders enhance the school's effectiveness. Trustees ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties and that resources are well managed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to identify risks to children. Staff are confident to raise concerns, and leaders take effective action to follow these up. This includes working with external agencies and safeguarding partners as required. Pupils learn how to keep themselves protected, including when they are online. There is appropriate policy and practice in relation to sexual abuse or harassment that may occur in or out of school.

Leaders ensure that there is strong communication with alternative provisions. This helps to keep children attending these settings safe. Leaders make suitable arrangements for the safer recruitment of adults working in the school.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for pupils in the early stages of learning to read is not effective enough. As a result, some pupils do not gain a strong enough foundation in reading to support their learning in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that the reading curriculum supports all pupils to read confidently and fluently.

## 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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Fairfield High School, to be good in June 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141705
<b>Local authority</b>	Bristol City of
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268734
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,069
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Toby Watson
<b>Principal</b>	Amanda Bridgewater
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.fairfield.excalibur.org.uk">www.fairfield.excalibur.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 November 2017

## Information about this school

- The principal was appointed on an interim basis in September 2022.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with visual and/or hearing impairments.
- The school uses three registered alternative provisions and three unregistered provisions.
- The school is part of the Excalibur Academies Trust.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 held discussions with the principal, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, members of the local governing body, a member of the board of

trustees and trust executive leaders.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, modern foreign languages and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and Ofsted's online pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

James Oldham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mike Thomas

Ofsted Inspector

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