

Inspection of a good school: Fairfields Primary School and Nursery

Rosedale Way, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN7 6JG

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Fairfields Primary School and Nursery continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Fairfields are warm and welcoming. They are respectful and show this through their good manners and mature attitudes. Pupils are proud of their school. They talk enthusiastically about their learning across a range of subjects and achieve well.

Pupils learn a broad and rich curriculum. They like all the trips and visitors that leaders organise. This helps to deepen pupils' understanding of the subjects they learn in school. Pupils enjoy taking part in a variety of after-school clubs that allow them to follow and develop their interests.

Pupils respond well to the consistently high expectations that all staff have. In lessons, they listen carefully to teachers and each other. Pupils work hard and have positive attitudes toward learning. They develop resilience. Pupils understand that it is good to make mistakes as this can help you learn more.

Pupils understand the school motto to be 'PROUD'. They like the rewards they can earn for being good role models. In the playground, pupils enjoy sports and if there are any disagreements, they know that staff will help to solve them. Bullying is rare. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy.

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

In most subjects, leaders have identified the knowledge that pupils should learn from Reception to Year 6. Teachers plan lessons that build carefully on pupils' previous knowledge. In the early years, leaders prioritise the development of language and children's communication skills. This is built on in subsequent years. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge and explain learning clearly. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can do, and address misconceptions straight away. This helps pupils to develop a secure understanding of what they are learning.

In a small number of subjects, teaching is less effective. This is because teachers lack the subject knowledge to teach the curriculum as leaders intend. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Teachers do not have the subject knowledge needed to consistently plan lessons or activities that build effectively on what pupils have learned previously.

Staff have high ambitions for all pupils' achievement in reading. Learning to read begins in the Nursery, where children learn to enjoy listening to stories being read aloud and re-telling familiar stories. As soon as pupils start in Reception, they begin to learn phonics. Skilled teachers help pupils to deepen their phonics knowledge in Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils use this knowledge to read and spell unfamiliar words. They read books that closely match their phonics knowledge. Pupils can practise using the sounds they know. This helps them to gain in confidence and read accurately and fluently. Teachers regularly check how pupils are faring with reading. Any pupils who need it have 'keep up' sessions so that they do not fall behind.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that they identify pupils' different needs. They give guidance to staff so that they can make changes to their teaching if pupils need this. A few pupils with SEND have more personalised timetables matched to their individual needs. Leaders ensure that the right support is put in place for pupils with SEND, working with external agencies where needed. Overall, pupils with SEND make strong progress with their learning and development.

Pupils behave well. From the early years, expectations about routines and how to behave towards others are clear. Pupils are polite towards each other and with adults. They have a clear understanding of the consistent school rules and know that these are applied fairly. Learning is rarely disturbed by others' behaviour. Pupils play and learn well together. They trust adults to deal with problems and disagreements. Pupils feel safe and are happy.

Staff are as ambitious for pupils' personal development as they are for academic success. Pupils embrace difference and know why they should respect people who have different beliefs, values and opinions. Older pupils develop self-awareness and self-confidence. They are good role models for younger pupils.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about how the school is led and that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. Leaders, including governors, are knowledgeable and have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online and in the community. They learn about fire safety, for example. Pupils know that some medicines help you and other drugs can be harmful.

Staff understand the school safeguarding systems. They report any concerns so that pupils are protected from harm. Leaders act quickly and they work together to ensure that actions help pupils to stay safe. Leaders train all staff to ensure they understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Governors carry out all safer recruitment checks and make sure that staff know about local and national risks to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, some teachers do not have secure and consistent subject knowledge. This means that in lessons, teachers are not able to build up knowledge effectively from pupils' previous learning, and pupils miss some essential knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that all teachers have secure and consistent subject knowledge to teach the planned curriculum effectively in all subjects.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2017.

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	117334
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255244
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gemma Louise Lester
Headteacher	Giovanni Gaidoni
Website	www.fairfields.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, other staff and members of the governing body. The inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to pupils and viewed pupils' work.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents and information, including minutes of governor meetings, school policies, and documentation and records relating to safeguarding.

- The 145 responses and 85 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. The inspector considered 30 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector considered the 145 responses to the pupil questionnaire. The inspector also spoke with pupils to seek their views and experiences of school.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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