

Inspection of a good school: Fairfield Infant School

Fairfield Road, Havant, Hampshire PO9 1AY

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2023

Outcome

Fairfield Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

As one parent commented: 'The school gives off such a lovely vibe and the encouragement from staff is faultless.' This is evident from the moment pupils arrive. Staff greet them at the classroom door with a friendly smile. Pupils are pleased to see both adults and their classmates, anticipating the day ahead. They quickly settle into the morning tasks designed to reinforce learning or practise skills. Staff sensitively scoop up anyone who does not settle easily, offering care and support in equal measure. These well-established routines, from Reception upwards, set the scene for purposeful learning and positive behaviour, inside and outside the classrooms, throughout the day.

All staff understand that strong support for pupils' personal development from the word go is essential for them to be successful learners. Staff take the time to understand the challenges that some pupils face. They go out of their way to make sure that all pupils are in the right frame of mind to benefit from learning. Learning animals, including 'wise owl', 'spinning spider' and 'persevering penguin', encourage the attributes pupils need to, for example, think carefully, make links in their learning and be resilient. Pupils work hard and retain important information across different subjects.

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

The Fairfield vision that 'everyone is valued and learning is fun' is undoubtedly pupils' lived experience. Pupils with additional needs or who face other barriers to learning are identified early. Staff are well supported in pinpointing what pupils' needs are and with strategies to support them in class. Pupils learn to welcome, and be accepting of, people or families who are different to them. Any hint of harmful language or behaviour is dealt with quickly and decisively. Classrooms are calm and playtimes enjoyable. The curriculum is well designed to make learning meaningful. Care is taken to develop staff's knowledge and to avoid unnecessary demands on them so that they have the skills and space to nurture pupils and teach effectively.

Pupils' best interests are at the heart of every decision. Relationships with parents are nurtured from before children start school. Promoting pupils' personal development and ensuring good attendance underpin pupils' academic achievements. Every effort is made to ensure that they thrive and become responsible members of the Fairfield family and the wider community. Pupils are taught about important matters such as healthy relationships, consent and risk in an age-appropriate way and learn about different faiths. Clubs and out-of-school activities offer a good mix of opportunities to 'have a go' and to start to develop an interest or skill in, for example, gardening, cooking or a sport. The school keeps a watchful eye on take-up of these activities, encouraging pupils who would most benefit to participate. While attendance is high overall, leaders are not complacent. They constantly reinforce their expectations, monitor attendance carefully and work with families to unpick the underlying reasons for absence and help overcome barriers.

Learning to read and developing a love of reading are central to the success of the school's curriculum, as is the teaching of mathematics. Phonics teaching starts promptly in Reception. Staff across the school are knowledgeable and teaching is precise. The investment in books that match the sounds that pupils are learning means that they experience success as they practise. Similarly, mathematics is taught accurately. Most pupils are learning to read and acquiring mathematical skills at an age-appropriate rate. Staff keep a careful check on their progress through regular assessments. Groups are adjusted to meet pupils' needs. Those who need to take things more slowly are well supported through specific teaching in very small groups or on an individual basis.

The rest of the curriculum is equally aspirational and designed to build learning over time, starting in early years. Visits and visitors to school enhance learning and broaden pupils' horizons. More often than not, leaders have drawn on published schemes or guidance, while making sensible adaptations to fit the Fairfield context and pupils' needs. In almost all subjects, this means that staff know how what they are teaching at any one time fits into the big picture. Using this guidance, they present knowledge clearly and teach skills correctly, and know what to check pupils are remembering. However, the journey from the early years curriculum into Year 1 is not clearly defined in a few areas. A couple of subjects in key stage 1 are not as well thought out as others. The school has rightly prioritised developing the leadership of subjects, with some staff and governors new to their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some variability in the clarity of the pathway from learning in early years to Year 1. The intended learning is not as clear in a couple of subjects in key stage 1 as it is for most. This means that, sometimes, the progression of pupils' knowledge and skills is not as well defined as it could be. The school should continue its work to review

and refine the curriculum, developing the role of foundation subject leaders further and re-establishing governors' oversight of individual 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	115904
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10296202
Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gill Tonkin
Headteacher	Lara Jelliff
Website	http://www.fairfield.hants.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been changes at leadership level since the last inspection. The headteacher took up post in September 2020 and the deputy headteacher a year before that. A third of teachers are new to the school since the last inspection, too.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and the early years leader. The inspector also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult and considered the school's plans in other subjects.
- Pupils', staff's and parents' views were gathered using Ofsted's surveys. The inspector also met with pupils and staff during the inspection. They talked to pupils while observing breaktimes and lunchtimes and with staff as they went about their work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Alison Bradley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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