

Inspection of a good school: Fairfield Road Primary School

Grove Street, Droylsden, Manchester M43 6AF

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are at the heart of all that the school does. They contribute strongly to the school community by taking on roles and responsibilities. For example, eco-councillors plant and grow food in the school garden and reading buddies help pupils in younger years to develop their love of reading. Pupil well-being champions recently secured funding to install a buddy bench to help them to look after pupils who might feel sad or lonely.

Pupils strive to meet the school's high expectations for their achievement, and in most subjects they achieve well. However, in some subjects, the school is in the early stages of developing the curriculum. In these subjects, in the past, pupils have not learned all that they should.

Pupils typically behave well. They strive to embody the 'Fairfield values' and are proud to receive certificates in recognition of this. Strong routines, established in the early years and maintained throughout the school, help pupils to understand what is expected of them. The school helps pupils to develop personal accountability for their own behaviour.

Pupils benefit from an assortment of clubs to develop their talents and interests, including cheerleading, boxing and the school choir.

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

The school and governors share an increasingly aspirational vision for pupils' learning. In many subjects, the curriculum is broad and ambitious. However, in some subjects, work to design the curriculum is in its infancy. In these subjects, the information that pupils should learn is not clearly defined. This makes it difficult for staff to design learning that securely builds on pupils' existing knowledge.

The school has adopted a strategic approach to equip teachers with the expertise that they need to design effective learning. In many subjects, it supports teachers to deliver the renewed curriculum through training and shared resources. Teachers value the supportive and collegiate working environment.

Teachers typically use successful techniques to check how well pupils are learning. They quickly spot any misconceptions that might inhibit pupils' understanding. However, in some subjects where the curriculum is in an earlier stage of development, staff are less effective in checking that pupils have secured the most important content. As a result, they are unaware of the gaps in knowledge that some pupils harbour.

The school has recently increased its capacity for oversight of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This has improved the identification of pupils' specific, additional needs and barriers, which has enabled staff to provide more individualised support. As a result, pupils with SEND successfully progress through the curriculum.

The school has strengthened its approach to teaching reading, by implementing a carefully selected phonics programme. Staff have received comprehensive training that has enhanced their proficiency, enabling them to deliver this approach effectively. Older pupils receive targeted support that successfully eliminates gaps in their reading knowledge.

The school takes every opportunity to promote a love of reading with pupils. This starts in the Nursery class, where children are immersed in the world of books. Staff work collaboratively with parents and carers to develop pupils' positive reading habits. They make sure that pupils are exposed to a wide variety of challenging and age-appropriate texts. As a result, most pupils read widely and often.

Pupils have typically high rates of attendance. The school swiftly identifies pupils whose attendance start to decline. It works closely with parents to overcome any barriers that may prevent their children from attending school as often as they should.

Pupils benefit from the calm and purposeful environment of their classrooms. In the early years, children settle in quickly. They adapt to the rhythms and routines of the school with ease. Children develop strong relationships with staff, who regularly check on their welfare and well-being.

The school equips pupils with a broad range of knowledge that supports their wider development. For example, pupils have a secure understanding of fundamental British values and how these apply in school and in society. Pupils enjoy learning about the different religious and cultural groups in the school and in the local community.

Governors lack sufficient oversight of some aspects of the schools' improvement work. For example, they do not have a strong understanding of the full extent of the curriculum offer and the impact on pupils' learning. This hampers governors' efforts to ensure that school improvement work is as focused and effective as it should be.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not identified the components of knowledge that pupils should learn and when they should learn them. This hampers the ability of staff to coherently develop pupils' understanding over time. The school should clearly define what pupils should learn in all subjects, so that staff can support pupils to develop a broad body of knowledge over time.
- In one or two subjects, the school's assessment approaches do not support staff to precisely identify the learning that pupils know and remember. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that go unchecked and hinder subsequent learning. The school should ensure that assessment approaches empower staff to swiftly identify and remedy gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Governors do not have effective oversight of some aspects of the school's provision, including the curriculum. This means that some weaknesses are not identified and rectified as quickly as they should be. Governors should ensure that they use all available information to challenge and support the progress of the school's improvement work.

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 November 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use 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	106207
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	10321300
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	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stacey Graham
Headteacher	Alec Stephenson
Website	www.fairfieldroad.tameside.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

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 her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the headteacher, and a range of staff. She also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and an independent school improvement partner.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of evidence, including leaders' self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The inspector also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.

- 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.
- The inspector spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and religious education. For each deep dive, she discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector discussed the curriculum in some other subjects with leaders.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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