



Fairfield Endowed CofE (C) Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112806
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279027
Inspection dates 5 June 2006 to 6 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Newell AI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior	School address	Boarstone Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		SK17 7NA
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0129822551
Number on roll	226	Fax number	0129822551
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Caitlin Bisknell
Date of previous inspection	4 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Margaret Buckley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairfield is an average sized junior school which is situated just out of the town centre of Buxton. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties are a little above the national average. The percentage of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is well above average. Almost all pupils are White British and a very small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of acquiring English. Attainment on entry is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The overall effectiveness of the school is currently inadequate because pupils do not reach the standards and fulfil the potential of which they are capable. The school judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory with some good aspects. This paints too positive a picture although there are strengths on which the school can build. Teaching overall is currently satisfactory and there are examples of good and outstanding teaching but it is evident that teaching could be stronger and particular weaknesses in teaching and assessment over time have contributed to pupils' underachievement. Leadership and management of the school have not played a rigorous or effective enough role in evaluating performance and tackling underachievement. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the introduction of new improvement strategies, particularly in teaching and assessment and the commitment by school leaders to eliminate weaknesses, indicate that there is now a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school provides inadequate value for money. The pupils' personal development, their behaviour and attitudes, the curriculum and the care for pupils are all satisfactory. The school provides a good range of enrichment opportunities and satisfactorily promotes the importance of pupils keeping fit and healthy. Attendance remains consistently below the national average. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupil achievement and leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to improve pupils' standards and achievement the school should: - ensure the senior management team, subject leaders and governors rigorously monitor school, pupil and staff performance - seek to improve the quality of teaching and learning so it more regularly matches that of the best practice - make the best use of test and assessment data to impact more significantly on how well pupils achieve - continue to work with parents and carers to improve attendance rates.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Overall the achievement and standards of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are inadequate. Assessment data indicates that pupils start school with standards that are above average. National test data and the school's assessment data shows that when pupils leave school standards overall in 2004 and 2005 were significantly below the national average. The value added data which tracks pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 indicates that achievement has been in decline since 2003 and in 2005 was significantly lower than found in most schools. The school, with intensive and effective support from the local authority (LA), has introduced a number

of innovative and well planned initiatives aimed at improving pupil achievement, particularly in reading and writing. The shoots of success are beginning to show but there is still work to be done to ensure that pupils make consistent progress as they move through the school. Standards for the current Year 6 pupils are higher than in previous years and are close to the national average. However, achievement over time for these pupils has still not been good enough given their attainment levels when they started at the school. The targets that the school sets are not always realistic and as a result there are years when targets are not met and other years when they are exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and pupils' well being are satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory and most pupils get on well together. The school's Positive Play initiative has contributed well to the fall in the number of pupil exclusions and to increasing pupils' self-esteem. Discussions with pupils indicate that staff tackle bullying issues well and that anti-bullying initiatives in school are increasing their awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and are good when teaching captures their interest. However a number of pupils are too passive in their learning and other activities, as seen when many older pupils chose not to sing familiar hymns in assembly. Attendance is below average, and affected by the poor turnout of a small minority of pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their feelings and experiences and to examine how their actions may impact on others. A satisfactory range of activities extends their understanding of the local culture but more could be done to develop awareness of multi-cultural aspects of life. Pupils make a sound contribution to the school and local community, although opportunities to lead the well established school council are restricted because its running and organisation are too adult dominated. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep fit and healthy but the school does not offer sufficient opportunities for pupils to run enterprise initiatives that could add to their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in school is currently satisfactory with some good and outstanding practice. However, evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that at times teaching is unsatisfactory because of a lack of challenge and low level of expectation in terms of the quality and quantity of work produced. Pupils' learning is at its best in one of the Year 6 classes when teaching is packed with pace and challenge and engages and captures the imagination of pupils from the start to the end of the lesson. Across the school teachers manage pupils well and always seek to establish positive relationships. Teaching assistants often contribute much to lessons but some teaching staff are not

always deployed to best effect to have the biggest impact on raising pupil achievement. Although teaching is often satisfactory in lessons it sometimes lacks urgency, vibrancy or challenge to really get the pupils sufficiently motivated. On occasions introductions to lessons are too long and not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to flourish as active and independent learners. Appropriate procedures are now in place for assessing pupils' attainment but the school has previously made inadequate use of this information to set accurate targets or to rigorously track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Consequently underachievement has gone unchecked. The school is now addressing this issue with vigour and determination. There are some good examples of marking of pupils' work, for example in Year 3 and 6, although in other instances it is too variable and does not always make clear what is needed to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, broad and reasonably balanced. The school places proper emphasis on the continuing development of literacy and numeracy skills, and the use of pupils' computer skills in different subjects of the curriculum continues to develop well. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills across the curriculum are not consistently capitalised on. Provision made for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory although at times there is not enough challenge for the more able pupils. The good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors add to pupils' educational experiences as well as supporting the school's push for healthy lifestyles and contribution to the wider community. Through its Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, the school ensures that it meets the requirements for the provision of drug and alcohol awareness and relationships education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory. Pastoral support is satisfactory and safeguards pupils effectively. Staff know and care for the pupils well and pupils feel that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Child protection procedures are secure and there are good links with external support agencies. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures are carried out effectively. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are recognised and programmes of support involving teaching assistants and parents are planned appropriately. The school has recently identified important weaknesses in how it uses assessment information to track pupils' academic progress. Although improvements are now being seen, it is evident that over time there have not been good enough procedures in place to provide the kind of clear guidance that would enable pupils to achieve as well as they could.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The headteacher demonstrates much pastoral care and compassion for the school and the pupils. However, the leadership of the school has not led a drive to improve standards and pupil achievement in a rigorous or robust enough manner. In addition improvement since the last inspection has not been good enough because important weaknesses relating to standards, achievement and assessment remain. There has however been improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, standards in this subject have improved well. Recent intervention from the local authority has led to the school implementing more effective initiatives aimed at raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics and improving teaching and assessment. These are beginning to reap rewards, although much remains to be done. In addition restructuring of the senior management team has taken place. Its role and that of subject leaders are now much more focused on their impact on improving pupil achievement. These factors indicate that the school has the capacity to improve. The governing body is very supportive of the school and is passionate about the school's place in the heart of the community. However, governors have not been effective enough in holding the school to account for its performance. The school's self-evaluation procedures, although accurate in some judgements, paint too positive a picture about the school. The headteacher has increasingly canvassed the views of pupils, parents and other stakeholders to inform the self-evaluation process but recognises that more still could be done.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that we visited your school recently and this letter is to tell you what we found. However, I would first of all like to take the opportunity to thank you all for making us welcome and for being helpful. We had the chance to talk to many pupils about what you like about the school and what you would like to see improved. It was good to hear that you feel that there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem and that when bullying does happen you are confident that adults will tackle it. We found that some lessons are exciting and fun, that staff care for you, that the school provides a good range of clubs and visits that you enjoy and that the school goes the extra mile to make you aware of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Many of you behave well and are keen to learn but occasionally some of you could do even better! I have spoken to Mrs Buckley and staff about what is needed to make your school a better and more exciting place to learn. There are times when some of you do not always do as well as you could and so we have asked the school to make sure that: - teaching is always interesting, exciting and challenging and helps you to work to the best of your ability; - the progress you are making and the standards you reach are regularly checked by staff and governors; - attendance is better than it is at the moment. Mrs Buckley, the staff and governors want the school to improve. Having met you I am sure that you will want to play your part. I wish you all every success in the future and it was a pleasure to meet you.