



# Fairhouse Community Infant School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114905  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279472  
**Inspection dates** 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Linda Murgatroyd LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Long Riding
<b>School category</b>	Community		SS14 1QP
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 8		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 523971
<b>Number on roll</b>	131	<b>Fax number</b>	01268 526389
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. John Toplis
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Iris Cerny

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Fairhouse Community Infant School serves an area of mainly local authority housing in Basildon. A significant number of families are from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds, and many children enter the school with below average levels of knowledge and skills for children of their age. Most children come from White British backgrounds, although there is a small proportion of children from other minority ethnic groups. A small number of children do not have English as their first language, entering the school in the very early stages of learning English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Fairhouse Community Infants is a good school, which is highly valued by parents. The school and the inspector agree about its good effectiveness. The headteacher is particularly successful at sharing her vision with others, and has inspired a team that works hard to improve children's learning. The school has made significant improvements since her arrival, and is very well placed to continue to improve. Children have a good start in their Reception year, but few attain the standards expected nationally. They make good progress during their time in school to reach average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing are improving, but are not yet equal to the other two subjects. All children, including those with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language, achieve well from their starting points when they come into school. The behaviour of most children is good, although there are some very challenging children for whom the school is seeking additional support. Overall, children work and play well together and enjoy school. The school works hard to encourage good attendance and it is improving, but it remains below average. Teaching is good overall, with effective strategies for teaching reading and mathematics in particular. Staff have high expectations, and children usually work hard and concentrate well. The school takes outstanding care of children, working with many agencies to support them and their families. The curriculum is good, and children are well prepared for their future lives, learning about staying healthy and safe, and playing a role in the wider community. Lunchtimes are exceptionally well organised. There is a wide range of activities to keep children busy and lunchtimes are very calm and pleasant as a result. The governing body is very effective. They support the changes initiated by the headteacher and provide challenges to ensure that these are right for the school. There is a wide range of systems for checking the school's work, and all concerned have a very accurate picture of the school's effectiveness, and areas in which it might develop further. Finances are very carefully managed, and the school provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue the work to raise standards, particularly in writing. - Further develop behaviour strategies to address the needs of the minority of very challenging children.
- Develop the work with parents to improve attendance and punctuality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Taking account of their below average attainment on entry to the school, children achieve well. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities and the few learning English as an additional language are supported effectively and make good progress. Both Reception classes provide a stimulating and encouraging environment. The provision is well planned, and children's progress is carefully assessed. They make good progress, but few attain the standards expected nationally. In Years 1 and 2 they

continue to make good progress and reach average standards in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing remain slightly below average. Preliminary results from the national assessments for 2006 confirm this pattern. Fewer children than average are reaching the higher levels in writing, but the gap is closing. Expectations of staff, parents and children have risen, and the school is now giving work which challenges the more capable children. As a result, the school has been particularly successful in raising the proportions of children reaching above average standards in reading and mathematics. The school sets challenging targets for its children, based on careful assessment and tracking of individuals and classes, and has a number of effective strategies in place to help to meet them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Children acquire an understanding of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles, and awareness of the world around them. They learn to work together in the classroom and help each other with their work and in the playground with activities such as Friendship Stop, where children can go if they have no one to play with. Through various activities and events such as the Green Fingered Club and charity fundraising, they make a good contribution to the wider community and develop social awareness. One parent said, 'They are taught that there is a big world out there, and you can be part of it.' As a result, most children move on to the next school well prepared for their next stage of learning. The school has a clear strategy for managing behaviour which is consistently applied by all staff. The behaviour of the majority is good, although there is some very challenging behaviour from a small minority, for which the school is seeking additional help. The school makes outstanding provision for lunchtimes, with a wide range of play equipment and activities to keep children busy and involved. Midday meals supervisors have had training in behaviour management, and the school council has been involved in redesigning the outside area and the dining room. As a result, lunchtimes both inside and outside are very calm and well organised. Children enjoy school immensely and most have very positive attitudes to work. Although attendance is below average, but the school is working hard to promote good attendance and discourage lateness by involving parents in the process and this is having positive results. Children learn about citizenship through the school council. There are class elections which provide a way for them to be involved in decision making. Children of all ages understand the benefits of exercise and good diet, and the school ensures that children are active. They are very well informed on topics such as road safety and follow safe practices in school. The focus on improving literacy and numeracy and on learning to work together contributes further to children's preparation for working roles in future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Staff have high expectations of work and behaviour and most children respond very well. They have positive relationships with children and manage them consistently and with good humour. The teaching of literacy and numeracy includes the use of well structured programmes which teachers use successfully to help children to build words using sounds and letters and to work with numbers. These programmes have played an important role in improving children's standards in reading and mathematics. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and understand the needs of children of this age. They use questions effectively to extend children's learning and maintain their interest. Children mainly settle quickly to written work and concentrate well. Teachers' planning is clear and is based on the use of careful assessments. This ensures that in most lessons work is pitched at the right level for all children. The quality of support provided by the teaching assistants is well planned and consistently good. Assessment is very thorough, and marking is effectively used to provide short term targets and appropriate guidance to children on how to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is correctly judged to be good by the school. In the last two years, there has rightly been a strong emphasis on improving standards in literacy and numeracy, and this has been achieved while continuing to provide the full range of other National Curriculum subjects. The school ensures that children cover the necessary aspects of each subject and progressively increase their knowledge, skills and understanding. In some topics, teachers make links across subjects to deepen children's understanding of what they are learning, and this has been identified by the school as an area for further development now that standards of literacy and numeracy are rising. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good, and computers are well used to extend children's learning in other subjects. There is a good range of before and after school clubs to enhance the curriculum further. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned for both indoor and outdoor work. The outdoor area shared by the two classes with Reception children is very attractively laid out, providing a good range of activities that adds well to the learning taking place indoors. Although teaching in these classes is organised, there are still good opportunities for children to develop their initiative and independence in activities which they select for themselves. The children's understanding of how to stay safe and healthy is very well promoted through the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The support that the school provides for children and their families and the care it takes of them is excellent. From the moment of entering the school, there is a welcoming atmosphere, effectively promoted by office as well as teaching staff. Because of this and the range of support for families, the involvement of parents in their children's learning has increased enormously over the last two years. Parents report that they are confident to come into the school for help with any issue concerning their children's education. As a result, children settle very quickly into school, and parents work closely with school to promote their children's learning and welfare. Children report that they feel safe in school, and that there is very little racism or bullying. Staff take excellent care of all children through very clear health, safety and welfare procedures. Child protection arrangements are good and are widely understood. Risk assessments are conscientiously observed. Breakfast and after school clubs provide good quality care for children. Children with special educational needs and the few learning English as an additional language are very well guided. Assessment of children's performance is outstanding, and all information is regularly updated to help plan appropriate support for any child who needs it. Parents are involved in setting and agreeing targets for their children, so that they know what to focus on when helping them at home.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good, and some elements are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, and is well supported by an able and enthusiastic assistant headteacher. She has effectively built a staff team who share her focus on school improvement. In a relatively short time, the headteacher has transformed the school from one identified by the local authority as causing concern to a happy community with a shared focus on raising standards and caring for children. Since 2004, a structured approach to literacy and numeracy and a systematic approach to managing behaviour have led to good improvements in standards and in the atmosphere inside the school. Parental involvement in their children's learning and their confidence in the school have turned around and are now a strength. The quality of teaching and learning is kept under constant review, and teachers are involved in frequent discussions about children's targets and their progress towards them. The headteacher and the assistant headteacher form a strong management team, complementing each other's skills. Other staff assume responsibilities enthusiastically and effectively. Much is done to ensure that vulnerable children and those with special educational needs are able to do as well as they can. The arrangements for all staff and governors to be involved in reviewing the school's work and planning developments are thorough, resulting in an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. This good track record, together with the commitment of staff and governors, means that the capacity for further improvement is very good. Parents' views are sought and acted upon. Governors are

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highly effective. They know the school very well through their regular visits and reports from many sources. They ask searching questions of the headteacher to ensure that the school is being well managed, and at the same time show support in a range of ways. Finances are managed and targeted well and their impact is checked to ensure that the school achieves good value for money in its spending.





# Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

## Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 might remember that I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my visit very much, and would like to thank you for talking to me and showing me what you were doing. I was there to see how well your school helps you to learn, and what I saw and heard helped me to decide that it is a good school. These are the things I liked best about Fairhouse Infants: - You try hard with your work, and make good progress, especially in reading and mathematics. - The staff teach you well and that is the reason your work is improving. - You learn to work and play well together and to look after yourselves. - Everyone at school takes very good care of you, so that you are safe and happy and your parents are very pleased. - Mrs Cerny, the staff and the governors know what they want the school to be like, and work hard together to make it a good place to be in. - The staff are very good at welcoming parents into school and making sure that they know how to help you at home. - There are lots of things for you to do at lunchtime, keeping you busy and behaving sensibly. There are some things that the staff and I think would make your school even better: - Mrs Cerny and all the staff are going to make sure that you all get better at writing. - Everyone in school is going to think of more ways to help the few children who do not behave well to be calmer and more settled. - The staff are going to keep working hard with the parents to ensure that all of you come to school every day, except when you are ill. I think that everyone at Fairhouse Infants can work together to do these things. I hope that you go on enjoying all the things you do there which help you to learn and play.