



Fairfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134621
LEA Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number 282618
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 7 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Glenfield Road Fairfield Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7PW
School category	Community	Telephone number	01642 581305
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	01642 571057
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr Kevin Strachan
Number on roll	477	Headteacher	Mrs Judith Harrison
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairfield is a large primary, created in September 2004 by the amalgamation of infant and junior schools on the same site. It serves an area of broadly average socio-economic character, but with some families from advantaged and some from disadvantaged circumstances. Small numbers of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, almost all of whom are English speaking. Pupils' attainment at entry is above the local average and slightly above the national average for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has achieved the Silver Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fairfield Primary is a good school where pupils achieve well. This confirms the school's and the parents' current views, although the school's outdated written evaluation is too low. One parent wrote that the school 'not only teaches children the lessons of education but also the emotional lessons of life.' Under the skilled and determined good leadership of the headteacher, with good support from other staff and the governors, the school has moved forward well since opening in 2004. Quality and standards are good in the Nursery and Reception classes, and high standards have been achieved by the end of Year 2 in 2005 and again this year. By the end of Year 6, standards have improved from above average in 2005 to much higher levels this year. Over half of the Year 6 pupils have done really well for their age in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This is because the good teaching helps almost all pupils to make good progress in learning, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic groups.

A real strength of the school is its good promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being, with outstanding effect on pupils' healthy lifestyles. Pupils' self-confidence grows as they move through the school and Year 6 pupils are mature and responsible, undertaking tasks and duties sensibly. The school looks after pupils well and has good procedures to ensure their safety. Pupils enjoy school. Their good attendance and their supportive comments about the staff and lessons reflect this. The school's assessment data shows, and the inspection finds, that the high standards achieved represent good progress over the two years since opening. They also exemplify the effectiveness of the school's improvement planning. Following an evaluation of the 2005 results, action taken by staff has greatly improved progress in mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils. Better marking and assessment procedures have helped to raise standards, but this improved assessment is not consistent between classes. The school is also reviewing how the curriculum is taught. The staff have identified that the core subjects provide a good basis for pupils' achievement, but have yet to develop more creative approaches to enliven children's learning and raise standards even further. The school gives good value for money and is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- In planning the curriculum, incorporate national guidance on creativity and enjoyment to raise standards and promote excellence in learning.
- Ensure that assessment for learning is consistently good across the school, and includes the pupils more in assessing and evaluating their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. As the school has only been in existence since September 2004, this judgement covers the pupils' progress,

achievement and standards over the two years since then. Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that many of them exceed the expected levels in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. This good progress has been maintained in Year 1 this year. By the end of Year 2, progress is also good so that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress overall. In 2005, Year 6 pupils reached above average levels in national tests in English, mathematics and science. Following staff training and the setting of challenging targets, results have risen to much higher levels this year, including those in mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic groups do well, some achieving much higher levels than the national average for their ethnic group. Pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT), and develop good skills by the time they leave the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school provides well for this area, outstandingly so in promoting a healthy lifestyle and the school's achievement of the Silver Healthy School Award reflects this. Pupils eat healthily and exercise regularly, and understand why this is important for them. Attendance is good. Pupils enjoy school very much, and have positive attitudes to learning. Almost all of them behave well and show kindness and consideration for others. They say that they feel safe, and are generally confident that any problems will be dealt with effectively by adults. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children settle well in the Nursery and, both there and in Reception, they make good progress in social and emotional development. Across the school, pupils work well together in pairs and groups, and they develop good understanding of their own traditions and faiths and those of other communities. Through membership of the school council and by performing various other responsible tasks, pupils grow in confidence and generally care for each other well. By developing good basic skills and learning how to cooperate and make decisions, pupils are well prepared for the next phase of education, and for life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, and leads to good progress in pupils' learning. The staff build good relationships with the pupils and foster in them a desire to learn. The high expectations they set for themselves and the pupils lead to high standards. Lessons are often well structured, with well organised and challenging activities that engage pupils' attention and make them work hard. When pupils are clear about what they are doing and why they are doing it, the rate of progress is usually good. This happened in a good science lesson when Year 5 pupils investigated the properties of sound enthusiastically in mixed groups and worked as effective young scientists. Sometimes, however, the

teacher's explanations are not clear enough and then pupils make only satisfactory progress. The staff often question pupils skilfully and elicit thoughtful responses, although this is not consistent across the school. Assessment of pupils' progress is often thorough and effective, and marking is clear and helpful. However, marking and assessment are sometimes too general, and do not involve pupils enough in considering how they might improve. Good support from teachers and support staff helps pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress towards their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It covers all statutory requirements, and it meets pupils' needs well in the main. The Foundation Stage curriculum is fully covered in the Nursery and Reception classes. Throughout the school, the good provision for the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT contributes well to the high standards achieved. An ongoing review of what is taught has led to more exciting ideas to promote pupils' writing and also their enjoyment and skills in mental mathematics. However, the staff leading this review have identified that a more creative approach to linking ideas and activities between subjects could lead to greater enjoyment and even higher standards. There are good enrichment activities, mainly involving sporting activities. A good range of visitors and trips, including a residential experience for older pupils, also increases the interest of pupils' overall learning. Transition to the next stage of education is handled well. Pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about recent visits to their secondary schools, and are excited about the transfer next term.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All required risk assessments and child protection procedures are in place. Parents appreciate that the school is very welcoming. They say that staff are approachable and always willing to discuss issues concerning their children. Support staff are deployed well and provide constructive support for vulnerable pupils, or those needing specific help. Pupils' enthusiasm for the school was exemplified when Year 1 pupils and staff arrived excitedly in period costume for a Victorian Day visit. Good and improving arrangements ensure that pupils are given appropriate guidance to help them do better. A good whole-school system also ensures that pupils' individual progress targets are checked regularly, and adjustments made in the light of new assessment information. Parents receive good information about their children's progress. However, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in assessing and evaluating their own progress. This prevents them making more rapid improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's good leadership and management promote good personal development and high standards in pupils' learning. The headteacher has led the development of the new school successfully, and has set clear and high standards for its work. She has brought the staff together well and appointed a good leadership team. She ensures that staff at all levels contribute well to the efficient management of this large primary. The nature of the school site, with the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6 in three separate buildings, has made this task difficult. The willingness of staff to overcome such obstacles in order to provide a good education for the pupils is to their credit. Governors are supportive but challenging, and know the school well. The staff evaluate the school's work and outcomes well, using good systems to check its performance. This leads to the effective planning and delivery of improvement. Parents' and children's views are taken into account in this process of self-review. Currently, the written evidence of the school's self-evaluation is not up to date. However, this has not detracted from the staff's use of evaluative information to prioritise specific areas for improvement, and to tackle them effectively.

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	2	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

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To the pupils of:

Fairfield Primary School

Glenfield Road

Fairfield

Stockton-on-Tees

TS19 7PW

6 July 2006

Dear Pupils

You will remember that we visited your school at the beginning of July to check how well it looks after you and helps you to learn.

First, we would like to thank you for looking after us so well, and making us feel really welcome. What you told us and the things we saw you do helped us to make our judgements.

We agree with you and your parents: Fairfield Primary is a good school. As it has only been open as a new school for two years, this is a good achievement for all of you. The staff work together successfully to provide a good education for you. This helps most of you to make good progress and reach high standards. You help here by behaving well most of the time and trying hard to learn what the staff plan for you. Your school keeps you safe and looks after you well, and helps you to develop outstandingly healthy lifestyles – you certainly looked active and cheerful to us! We were also impressed that Year 1 had been back to Victorian Times without Dr Who's TARDIS!

To help you even more, we have asked the staff to make your work even more creative and enjoyable, and to involve you as often as possible in checking your work so that you understand better how you can improve it further. You can help by continuing to join in all the activities enthusiastically, and working well together to improve each other's learning.

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson (Lead Inspector), John Atkinson and Ann Wallis (Additional Inspectors)