

Fairfield Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106207
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	287443
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike McLachlan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Malinda Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Dobson
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Fairfield Road Droylsden Manchester Lancashire M43 6AF
Telephone number	0161 3703625
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairfield Road is a larger than average primary school. The number on roll is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school is housed in a Victorian building in an urban area with higher than average levels of social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above average and increasing. The majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is broadly average and these are mainly from asylum seeking families. There is a growing number of pupils who start and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school is in receipt of the Silver Eco-schools award and is part way towards gaining Healthy Schools status. A Sure Start Centre is currently being developed on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Fairfield Road Primary school is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and has a number of good features. The school has a strong family atmosphere where children feel safe and enjoy learning and playing together. Attainment on entry is below average overall. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables pupils to make good progress so they are capable and confident to move on to the next stage. They enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. These are maintained so that standards are broadly average by the time they leave school. Overall, the progress made across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. A relative weakness has been the progress made by some boys and by the most able pupils as fewer than average reached the higher levels. While improvements are evident, there remain some lessons where work is too easy for the most able.

Personal and social development is good and pupils enjoy coming to school. Behaviour, particularly in lessons, is good. Pupils show enthusiasm for their work and collaborate well, reflecting the school's aims that 'together we achieve'. A particularly strong feature of the school is the racial harmony shown by the pupils. Pupils have good understanding of eco and health issues. Care and guidance is good, consequently, pupils feel safe, know there is an adult to turn to if they feel unhappy and feel confident and well prepared to move on to their next school. Parents show overwhelming support for the school and have confidence in all it provides. The school has a number of systems for tracking how well pupils are doing but these do not readily show how well pupils have progressed since they started school and if they are on track to reach challenging targets by the time they leave school.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Good in-service training and more rigorous monitoring by senior and middle managers have raised expectations and are improving the quality of teaching. Particularly good work has been done in ensuring a consistent and more challenging approach to the teaching of literacy. Good relationships, enthusiastic learning and challenging collaborative activities are the hallmarks of the best teaching. However, in some lessons, the work set does not sufficiently stretch or challenge the most able pupils. While marking in literacy is particularly effective in showing pupils what they need to improve, this is not consistent across all subjects. A satisfactory curriculum is showing signs of improvement, particularly in the teaching of literacy and in linking subjects through topic work. The extra-curricular provision is good and enthusiastically enjoyed by pupils. The 'cheerleaders' rousing performance at lunchtime was a joy to watch. Enrichment through visitors and visits, particularly the residential activities contribute significantly to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social, cultural and multicultural development.

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features. Many of these good initiatives are relatively new and while very promising, have yet to fully impact on raising standards and securing good progress for all pupils. Regular monitoring identifies areas for improvement but they are not then rigorously implemented with clear targets to ensure success. The good governing body provide considerable support and act as a critical friend through direct involvement with senior managers, subject coordinators and class groups. Given the recent consolidation of the senior management group, the clear vision and high expectations of the headteacher and chair of governors, the school has a good capacity to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Ensure work is planned more consistently to challenge the most able pupils and teachers' marking provides more consistent advice on how pupils can improve their work.
- Refine tracking systems to ensure pupils' progress towards their expected levels by the end of school is more easily identified.
- Ensure action plans have specific, measurable targets and deadlines to enable more effective monitoring of leaders work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall, attainment on entry is below average, although for a large number of pupils it is well below average, particularly in language, social and numerical skills. Pupils get off to a flying start and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Those pupils who enter with well below average standards make the best progress so that by the time pupils enter Key Stage 1, most have reached standards that are broadly average. Consequently, pupils are well prepared to move on to the next stage of learning. Standards reached by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are also broadly average, indicating satisfactory rather than good progress in both key stages. In 2006, there were fewer pupils reaching the higher levels in the national assessments in Years 2 and Years 6 and literacy skills were weaker overall. Work seen during the inspection indicates rising standards in literacy as a result of recent improvements in teaching. However, overall progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 remains broadly satisfactory as the most able and some boys do not always achieve as well as might be expected because teachers do not always match work to their needs. Well targeted support from the school and other agencies enables pupils whose first language is not English and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress so that they can successfully work alongside their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall quality of pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and all it provides for them. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils behave well in lessons and generally around school as a result of the hard work put in by the staff. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well promoted through assemblies and other activities. A particular strength is pupils' awareness of other cultures, evident in the way pupils of all races play and learn together harmoniously. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep healthy and participate enthusiastically in a growing range of physical activities, such as the lunchtime dance and cheerleaders club and inter-school teams. The school council enables pupils to contribute well to the life of the school, for example, improving the range of outdoor play equipment. Pupils show good environmental awareness through the work of the Eco team, consequently the school has received the Eco Schools Silver Award. They make a good contribution to the wider community by raising funds for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although there are some examples where teaching is clearly good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Here, there is a varied range of learning experiences to develop children's independence and there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of language skills and outdoor play to enhance the children's learning opportunities. Where teaching is good, pupils see a purpose to their learning because of the practical and active learning required. In these lessons, questioning is used well to help children recall prior knowledge and talk through how they arrived at the answer. Pupils respond well in lessons where imaginative use is made of information and communication technology. For example, young pupils showed great excitement and knowledge during their interactive whiteboard presentation on 'How a bicycle works'. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as well as those with English as an additional language and this enables these pupils to learn well. However, although improving, teaching is not yet consistent. Not all teachers plan work to challenge pupils at the right level, the same task is often given to all pupils and, consequently, the more able pupils do not make sufficient progress because work is too easy. Whilst most of the pupils' work is regularly marked, with strengths in literacy, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the setting of targets in other subjects so pupils do not always have clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Overall, the curriculum has a number of good elements but is overall satisfactory as there are weakness in the way it is planned to meet the needs of the most able pupils and some fairly recent initiatives have yet to impact fully on raising standards and achievement. This is a contributory reason why pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory rather than good. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum is good with ready access to outdoor activities. There are satisfactory and increasing opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology in other subjects. The recent initiative of linking subjects in themes is beginning to help pupils make connections in their learning. However, although there are additional activities outside lessons for those with gifts and talents, insufficient attention is given to their needs within some lessons limiting the progress they make. Activities outside lessons are good in range and quality, particularly the emphasis on first-hand experiences and the growing opportunities for team sports and residential activities. Visitors to the school, alongside the good opportunities for pupils to learn and live in a multi-ethnic British society, ensure the school is free from racial tension.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. All required procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Staff are sensitive to pupils' feelings and anxieties and take particular care to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. Positive relationships exist with outside agencies and, as a result, vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs are provided with good support. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to turn to if they are

worried. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education, especially those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems are in place to track pupils' academic progress but it is not always easy to identify if pupils in each year group are on track to reach their expected levels by the time they leave school. Targets are set, for example, in literacy, but this good practice is inconsistent across other subjects. The school maintains close links and consults well with parents and carers ensuring that they are informed about the work their children are doing and the progress they make. As one parent said, 'the school is the next best thing to your own family', reflecting the high regard in which it is held by the overwhelming majority of parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the direction of the school, has recently established a full senior team and introduced regular monitoring exercises of pupils' and teachers' work. Self-evaluation and monitoring procedures are broadly accurate, although sometimes modest, however, the resulting action plans are not always detailed enough or have specific, measurable targets linked to raising standards. A good staff development programme, in literacy, for example, has raised the sights of pupils and staff and has ensured consistency in teaching across the year groups. Similar initiatives are planned to improve standards in other areas. The good governing body with its innovative 'Every Child Matters' and 'Every Adult Matters' committees provide robust challenge as well as good support and have high expectations for further improvement. Good progress has recently been made on issues arising from the last report, although, because of staffing disruption, the pace of change has been slower than might be expected. The leadership teams are now securely established and poised to bring about the further improvements needed.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you all on behalf of the inspection team for the way you represented your school during our time with you. We were very impressed by the way you were all so friendly, saying a cheery 'hello' whenever you passed us. You were a credit to yourselves, your staff and your parents or carers.

We think you go to a school that has many good features and provides a satisfactory education for you all. You reach standards in line with the national average which shows that your progress is satisfactory and for some of you good. We think that the more able students should be able to reach higher standards and are pleased that the school has plans to help make this happen. With your help and hard work this should be possible.

You told us you feel safe in school and that you enjoy being consulted through your school, eco and health councils. We were impressed by the way you enjoy your lessons, each others' achievements and the way you spontaneously quoted your schools aim that you can achieve more working as a team during the celebration assembly. A real delight is the way children of all backgrounds learn and play together.

We think teachers plan an interesting range of activities for you to follow and this is improving, particularly in the way you look at important topics while learning the basic skills. However, we think that the work for the more able pupils should be more challenging and this would make your curriculum better. You respond well to the good care and guidance you receive so that by the time you leave school, you are confident to move on to your new schools. We were 'tickled pink' by the way your teachers' marked your literacy work and gave you your 'greens for growing'. We think it would be helpful for the same quality of advice to be given in all your subjects. Some of you find your work easy at times so we want your teachers to make sure they all give you work that really stretches you. We also thought that it would help if teachers kept an eye on how well you were progressing towards your expected levels in the Year 6 test throughout your time in school.

We think you headteacher, senior staff, teachers and governors have good plans to improve the school but the plans need to have tighter targets to make sure they are kept on track. We believe that with your support and hard work your school will become even better.