

Fairfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116232
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	290464
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Pritiben Patel

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian May-Miller
Headteacher	Mrs Phyl Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002
School address	Council Road Basingstoke RG21 3DH
Telephone number	01256 473886
Fax number	01256 330997

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairfields is a large primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British origin and the remainder are from a variety of other backgrounds. About 6% of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is below average. Pupils who join or leave the school at other than the expected times is high. The school has been awarded the Enhanced Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Fairfields is a satisfactory school with outstanding features in pupils' personal development. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the school.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy; together provide strong leadership for the school. They have successfully addressed areas from the last inspection such as the underachievement of pupils in Year 5, raising standards in science as well as increasing opportunities to celebrate and value the diversity of the rich cultures represented in the school. Senior leaders have also improved the curriculum and have successfully raised standards in writing.

Children currently start school with the skills and understanding generally expected for their age. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, consequently children make good progress and attain average standards with strengths in personal, creative and physical development by the time they join Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through school and attain average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. High pupil mobility has a negative impact on the school's standards.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents commented very positively about the ethos of the school. For example, 'There is an ethos of mutual respect within the school, the children know they are heard, what they think counts and is acted upon'. Pupils are clearly aware of their rights and responsibilities as there is a strong focus on including pupils in decision making. Pupils have positive attitudes, an outstanding enjoyment of school and behave well. Pupils' understanding about safe practices and contribution to the community, including the global community is outstanding. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is also outstanding as a result of the school rewarding healthy eating during assemblies.

The curriculum, including extra-curricular provision, is good. Speaking, listening and drama activities are strong features of the curriculum and have helped to raise standards in pupils' writing. Pupils' outstanding social skills and confidence, along with their sound basic skills, prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

The Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Strong aspects include positive relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils are given opportunities to take ownership of their own learning. The teachers use the interactive whiteboards to engage pupils and discussion in pairs is used well to promote pupils' language development. However, teaching is not always pitched at the appropriate level and, as a result, work for pupils is either too hard or too easy.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good overall. Pastoral support is a strong feature. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress in line with their peers due to the effective support they receive. The school's support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is exemplary and is recognised nationally. Target setting in writing has been a focus for the school. Pupils' good knowledge and understanding of their targets has helped to raise standards in writing. However, not all pupils are clear about the next steps for improvement in mathematics. Consequently standards in mathematics are not as high as in English. The school has forged good links with parents, local secondary schools and external agencies, in order to meet pupils' needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that work is matched more closely to pupils' abilities, taking into account what they already know.
- Improve standards in mathematics by ensuring pupils know their next steps for learning.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. When the children enter the school their skills are typical of those of most four year olds. Good provision ensures that children make good progress overall and reach the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Strong personal, physical and creative development reflects the emphasis placed upon these areas of learning.

Standards at Key Stage 1 and 2 have been broadly average for the last two years. High pupil mobility has had a negative impact on the school's standards. Performance is stronger in English than in mathematics because pupils have benefited from knowing the next steps in learning in this subject. Pupils' rate of progress overall is uneven, varying from year to year and between subjects, reflecting variability in the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils respond well to the school's strong ethos based upon rights, responsibility and respect. They thrive in this safe and supportive atmosphere. Pupils behave well and are keen to voice their opinions and listen to the ideas of others in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is working very hard with parents to improve this. Pupils have an excellent awareness of the impact of their actions and they respect the beliefs and opinions of others. Through the curriculum, and from visitors to the school, pupils gain an outstanding understanding of different cultures and traditions.

Pupils carry out responsibilities very conscientiously. Members of the school council are highly active in the school and talk enthusiastically about the changes they have initiated. Pupils' economic well-being is enhanced through the opportunities they have to work collaboratively and through enterprise projects. The school places a strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles. This is borne out by pupils' outstanding understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and by the large numbers who take part in the excellent sporting opportunities on offer.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good due to the strong emphasis on speaking and listening as well as the encouragement that children receive. A parent commented, 'Since my child started

at this school her confidence has grown tremendously'. Teaching in the rest of the school is less consistent although inspectors observed some good lessons across the school. In better lessons teachers make good use of the pupils' contributions. Teachers create lively lessons that engage pupils well, through the use of carefully selected discussion partners, where pupils talk freely and confidently to their buddies. In weaker lessons, the work is not always pitched to match the abilities of all pupils. As a result, they either struggle with the work set or more able pupils often find the work too easy. Insufficient use is made of pupils' assessment information to inform the planning of new lessons. Marking does not always indicate where pupils need to go next in their learning, particularly in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has started to develop a topic based curriculum in order to help pupils to make meaningful links in their learning but this approach is not fully embedded. There has been a focus on providing pupils with opportunities to produce extended writing in different subjects. This, along with the improved opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills, has had a positive impact on the attainment in writing by the end of Year 6. Opportunities for pupils to participate in drama activities have improved as a direct response to pupils wanting a more 'fun' curriculum.

Enrichment opportunities such as Creativity Week and Kenya Day have a very positive impact on pupils' personal development and enjoyment, as well as contributing to their understanding of rights and responsibilities and their roles as global citizens. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of clubs such as football, rugby and dance clubs, and good use is made of specialist teachers particularly in art and music.

Pupils' good development of information communication and technology (ICT) skills, were demonstrated by work such as a multi-media presentation about Florence Nightingale and by databases put together by pupils using secondary resources.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided are strong features of the school and the vast majority of parents agree with this. As one parent commented, 'The teachers are so respectful towards the children - they offer such wonderful support'. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils' well-being and self esteem are given high priority. Pupils commented freely that they felt safe in the school environment and that bullying would not be tolerated by their teachers. Child protection procedures are rigorous and vulnerable pupils are fully supported through a detailed working knowledge of circumstances that may adversely affect any child. The school is successfully increasing the use of target setting to improve consistency of learning across the school. However, this is less evident in mathematics, apart from in Year 6. Systems for tracking the progress of pupils as they move through the school are improving, but the information gained from this is not always used to meet the needs of individual pupils in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The head works hard to develop teachers' expertise and knowledge in order to raise their impact on pupils' standards and achievement. There is a strong sense of team work and leaders at all levels are encouraged to take ownership in school in order to increase the accountability of staff. Senior leaders have had a positive impact on the curriculum which is now becoming more meaningful for pupils. Standards in writing have improved by the end of Year 6. The head has not been afraid to tackle unsatisfactory teaching and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning is improving. English and mathematics subject leaders play an active role in the development of their subject areas. They have shared best practice and led staff training. Subject leaders have monitored some lessons but have not done so on a regular basis. The school is now putting plans together to extend the role of the science leaders as they are new to their roles. The school's self evaluation is good. Leaders at all levels are successfully focused on raising pupils' achievements further. They know the school's strengths and areas for development and plan carefully to address any shortcomings.

Governors are actively involved in the school's self-evaluation process. As well as checking on its work they provide good support and challenge to staff and contribute well to the school's capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	2
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	3

Personal development and well-being

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

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?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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**

3 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield's Primary School, Basingstoke, RG21 3DH

On behalf of the inspectors I would like to thank you very much for being helpful when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work.

You go to a satisfactory school and your personal development and well-being is outstanding. Here are the main reasons for this judgement:

- You make satisfactory progress and attain average results in tests because you have satisfactory teaching with good aspects.
- You get on very well with each other and your teachers and, as a result, your behaviour is good.
- Your outstanding enjoyment of school is due to the good curriculum the school offers, including a wide range of interesting activities.
- All adults in your school make sure that you are safe, happy and well looked after.
- The headteacher, governors and staff work hard on your behalf so things are getting better.

We believe that some things can be improved in your school. The quality of teaching and learning should improve if all teachers use the information they have about you, to plan lessons and then work will be more relevant to your abilities. We also believe that standards in mathematics can be improved if you are all aware of your next steps for improvement. I am sure that you will rise to this challenge and continue to work as hard as you can!

With best wishes for your future success,

Pritiben Patel (Lead inspector)