

Fairisle Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116251
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	290472
Inspection date	12 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Gehane Gordelier HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Francis
Headteacher	Mrs Susanne Ottens
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002
School address	Fairisle Road Lords Hill Southampton SO16 8BY
Telephone number	023 8073 1199
Fax number	023 8073 9099

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage, achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, aspects of the curriculum, care, guidance and support and the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Evidence was gathered from the inspector's discussions with staff and pupils, feedback from parents, the observation of five part lessons, a presentation by some pupils in Year 2, data about the performance of pupils as well as school documentation, samples of pupils' work and information about attendance. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment as given in its self- evaluation were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Fairisle Infant and Nursery School is a three-form entry school and is larger than most primary schools. It has attached Nursery provision and community facilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high and more than twice the national average. The numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing year on year but remains lower than is the case nationally. Although still relatively few, an increasing number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is higher than in most schools, although the proportion with a statement of educational need is in line with the national figure.

The school provides strategic leadership in information and communication technology (ICT) and as such supports other schools. The Healthy Schools Award has been achieved three times by the school and the Active Mark twice. The school has also been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark twice and the Artsmark (silver). The school has also received the Investors in People award twice.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fairisle Infant and Nursery School is a good school with outstanding features. Staff are committed and hard working and will go the extra mile to ensure that pupils are safe, feel valued and well cared for. One parent states, 'I am very happy that my child attends Fairisle School. I believe it is the best school in my area'. Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher the school is very well led and managed. Leaders and managers at all levels are developing their roles successfully and some, for example the Foundation Stage leader, provide models of excellent leadership. Consequently, pupils get a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and go on to benefit from good teaching and an exciting and enriched curriculum as they progress through the school.

Pupils begin Nursery with levels lower than expected for their age. Most make good and some make excellent progress by the end of Year 2 reaching standards that are in line with national averages. The school makes good use of data to track and monitor pupils' progress, to identify those at risk of underachieving and to set challenging targets. This helps to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress. Pupils in Year 2 exceeded their challenging targets for reading, writing and mathematics in 2007; they did particularly well in achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and in mathematics. The school has introduced a phonics programme to further improve levels of reading and help raise standards. This is already having an impact on raising standards in the Reception classes in both reading and writing. However, the school has yet to ensure that the teaching of phonics is done rigorously and systematically throughout the school.

Among the school's many strengths is the level of pastoral care, guidance and support, which enhances pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to value and respect others including those from other cultures and faiths. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of right and wrong and this is leading to their outstanding behaviour. Most aspects of pupils' personal development and well-being are either good or outstanding. Consequently, for their age, pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and know how to keep themselves safe. They make an excellent contribution to their community, for example through the school council, and develop the skills they need for the next phase of their education and future. Pupils really enjoy learning and coming to school. One pupil states, 'I love school because I like my teachers and have lots of friends'.

Despite pupils' appreciation of their school, attendance levels are at best satisfactory. The school has increased the rigour with which it is tackling inadequate levels of attendance of some pupils and, in some cases, this has brought about good levels of improvement. The school has benefited from good support provided by individual education welfare officers; however, according to the school, the lack of continuity of personnel has proved unhelpful.

Nevertheless, the school works very successfully with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils receive good levels of support. Parents, including those who are not British nationals, appreciate the support provided through family learning initiatives. The school has also risen to the challenge of gaining increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, by welcoming this as an opportunity of adding to the richness of diversity in the school.

Teaching is good with pockets of outstanding practice and the school has successfully improved teaching where it has not been good enough. Teachers know their pupils well and they take good account of the different ways in which pupils learn. The good teaching is characterised

by clear learning objectives, the use of structured talk activities, good opportunities for pupils to share ideas and work together and the use of role-play. Teaching also makes outstanding use of ICT to engage and motivate pupils and to support and extend their learning. Pupils appreciate having concepts demonstrated and explained visually as well as hearing new concepts being shared with them orally. This is of particular value to those who speak English as an additional language as well as English pupils whose vocabulary and language skills are limited. There are, however, missed opportunities in lessons to encourage pupils to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read and write new and unfamiliar vocabulary.

Staff work well as a team and, as a result, support staff contribute very well to lessons and to the good overall quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils. The school has rightly focussed on improving the use of assessment to support learning. Consequently, older pupils are beginning to identify for themselves how they can improve their work. Teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback much of which is done orally. However, the quality of marking in pupils books is variable.

Leaders and managers at all levels have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of improvement and are successful in their efforts of bringing about change and improvement. Staff share a collective responsibility of ensuring the smooth and effective running of the school. This leads to a common sense of purpose and determination to provide pupils with a good education that will stand them in good stead for the future.

The quality of governance is good and the school is held to account to ensure it provides good value for money. However, despite the focus on learners and standards, there has been no formal monitoring of the impact of the school's policy on race or equality and parents/carers as well as governors have not been informed about the impact of the school's work in this area.

There were no key areas for improvement given at the time of the last inspection; nevertheless, staff have worked hard and challenged themselves to improve further. Clear and well-focussed leadership and management together with strong links with parents, a rich curriculum, effective teaching as well as the many excellent ways in which pupils are helped to develop socially, emotionally and academically highlight the school's excellent capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Nursery is a designated unit for Southampton's Early Years inclusive places. The learning environment in the Nursery is of high quality and is extremely well organised and well managed. Children benefit enormously from high quality resources and good teaching. They make particularly good progress in their personal, social, emotional and mathematical development. The assessment of children's progress is particularly effective in identifying what children need to help them to develop into successful and confident learners. The school's observations show that those children who begin the Reception year having attended the school's Nursery generally have greater independence, awareness of routines and a more secure understanding of the early skills than those who do not. Children progress well in Reception and there are helpful systems in place to ensure a smooth transfer to the next phase of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve levels of attendance.
- Ensure consistent, systematic and rigorous teaching of phonics throughout the school.
- The governing body need to ensure that all statutory requirements are met in full.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairisle Infant and Nursery School, Southampton, SO16 8BY

I am the inspector who visited your school for a day. I am writing to thank you for helping me with my work and to share with you some of the things I found out. I agree with you that yours is a good school and that some things are fantastic. I was very impressed with your outstanding behaviour and with how much you know about being healthy and keeping yourselves safe. You help to make your school a very lovely and special place and you told me how much you really enjoy your lessons and like your friends and teachers.

Your school works very well with your parents to help you to do your best. Your teachers work very hard because they care a lot about you and want you to be happy and successful. I was particularly impressed with how well you use computers and all the clever and exciting things you do in your lessons.

The grown ups who help to run the school are doing a good job and some of them are particularly outstanding, like your headteacher and the person who runs the nursery. I have made some suggestions to help your school become even better than it is already. These are as follows.

- Those of you who do not come to school every day when you are supposed to, need to make sure you come to school as often as you should.
- The school needs to make sure that you are all able to make better use of letters and sounds to help you with reading and writing.
- The governors need to make sure they do everything they are supposed to.

It was a pleasure to meet you and come to your school and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Gehane Gordelier

Her Majesty's Inspector