



# Fairfield Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122552  
**Local Authority** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
**Inspection number** 292436  
**Inspection dates** 12–13 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ronald Cohen

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Toton Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Stapleford, Stapleford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG9 7HB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9179266
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	406	<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9179866
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Christopher Collins
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Howatson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 July 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	12–13 December 2006	292436

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Fairfield Primary School is a larger than average primary school on the south-west edge of Nottingham. Large intakes into the school at the beginning of Years 3, and further significant intakes during Year 5, mean that the school's population in Years 3 to 6 is much larger than that of the combined totals of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Nearly all pupils are White British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. Attainment on entry 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: 3

Fairfield Primary is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school, which already has good features. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with average knowledge and understanding, but with weaker social and emotional skills. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but for many, progress in reading and mathematical development is good. Most pupils enter Year 1 attaining average standards for their age. In the last two years, the senior leadership team, strengthened by recent appointments, has secured considerable improvements in the school's provision. These projects include an exciting skills-based curriculum and more thorough assessment and tracking procedures. They have already had measurable success in some key subjects, such as mathematics, and are beginning address weaknesses in pupils' writing. Consequently, standards are once again rising and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their behaviour is generally satisfactory, but it is better in class than around the school. Most pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in good attendance. They appreciate the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise and respond well to the good range of opportunities provided to promote them. Their contributions to the school and to the local and wider communities are satisfactory, as is their preparation for later life. Teaching and learning have improved recently and are good overall. Pupils are making better progress in lessons than they have in the past, although these improvements are not yet reflected fully in test results. Teachers have high expectations and lessons have a brisk pace. Learning is now at the heart of the vast majority of lessons and teachers are planning skilfully to challenge pupils of all abilities. Teachers make the most of opportunities provided by the new curriculum to promote literacy and numeracy through subjects. However, many pupils still have limited vocabulary because they get too few opportunities to write at length in a range of contexts. The school takes care of its pupils well. Efficient procedures for key aspects, such as child protection, are effective and teachers take a close interest in pupils' welfare. As a result, pupils feel safe and valued. New procedures for tracking pupils' progress are satisfactory but, because they are not yet sufficiently rooted in all subjects, the quality of guidance that pupils receive about their work varies considerably. The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher and senior leadership team are analytical in their approach to school self-evaluation and actively pursue ways of raising standards and improving pupils' progress. Other staff with management responsibilities make a satisfactory contribution to forward planning. The special needs and the mathematics coordinators monitor standards and quality effectively. However, subject leadership is not equally effective across the school and this reduces the impact of school improvement planning. Governors are supportive and are beginning to hold the school more rigorously to account. There is a shared commitment to ensure pupils' future success. Pupils' achievement slipped but has recovered because weaknesses have been resolved and the infusion of new personnel into senior leadership posts has already had an impressive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Consequently the school's capacity to improve further is good and it gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Raise the standards of writing throughout the school by extending pupils' vocabulary and by giving them more opportunities to write at length.
- Use the new tracking systems more effectively to ensure that all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Ensure that all subject leaders monitor standards and quality consistently and contribute effectively to planning for school improvement

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

There has been a downward trend in standards and achievement over the past few years. However, as a result of recent developments in teaching and the curriculum, pupils' learning has improved and standards in English, mathematics and science are rising.

Children in Reception make good progress in reading and numeracy, but their progress in other aspects of communication and language development is slower. Pupils make good overall progress in Years 1 and 2. In 2006, assessments at the end of Year 2 were above average overall, but standards in writing lagged somewhat behind other core subjects. The latest Year 6 test results were above average in mathematics, broadly average in science and reading but below average in writing. Inspection evidence shows that standards and achievement are satisfactory overall but that pupils' progress in writing is limited by a lack of opportunities to develop an extensive vocabulary by writing at length in all subjects. Throughout school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Standards in art and design, history and religious education are above those nationally expected for pupils of this age.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall but has some strong features. Numerous sports initiatives have a high level of participation because pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and enjoy being active. Pupils know they are part of a caring community and this gives them skills for their future well-being. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory but some parents and pupils are rightly concerned about the small number of pupils, mainly boys, who do not behave as well as they should in the playground and around the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. Their cultural understanding is good because the school has strong international links. The school council is proud its success in getting better toilet facilities and playground equipment. All pupils have opportunities to contribute to the school and wider community by their involvement in a range of fund raising events.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching is effective because teachers set clear learning objectives, which they share with pupils. Teachers challenge pupils' thinking with well-focused questions which require pupils' to justify and explain their answers. This is particularly strong in Year 6 lessons. Teachers have high expectations for their pupils' learning so pupils are well motivated and complete their tasks enthusiastically. Teachers have particularly good rapport with the pupils. Pupils and teachers have embraced the new curriculum enthusiastically because it puts learning at the heart of the lesson and this leads to pupils not only enjoying the lessons, but also making good progress. In the few weaker lessons, teachers do not give pupils enough encouragement to be independent learners. Marking is generally good. Some pupils know their targets and receive clear advice about how they can improve their work, but this is not yet common practice throughout the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The staff has worked very hard to develop the basic curriculum so that it fully meets the needs of the pupils and accords well with national requirements. The early signs are that this work has been very successful and has resulted in a good curriculum, which is improving quality of teaching and learning. The planning now concentrates more on skills and on the different ways pupils learn. There are good links between subjects which help pupils to understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. These changes need time to become fully embedded throughout the school. Teachers are flexible in the way they plan so that pupils' interests can be followed up. The school makes good use of available expertise to provide a curriculum which includes French and musical and sporting activities. There is a good range of extra curricular activities and these enable some pupils to extend their knowledge and skills further, especially in sport, music and art. The school makes particularly good use of visits and visitors to support classroom teaching.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Robust procedures, including those for child protection, underpin the school's caring approach and ensure pupils' safety. As one parent commented, 'Fairfield has the children's best interests at heart'. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. Pupils know what to do if they have concerns and feel confident they can confide in a trusted adult. Younger pupils value talking to older 'playground mentors' when they need help. Systems for supporting academic achievement are satisfactory but improving, thanks to the recent introduction of high quality procedures to track and monitor pupils progress. Although

most pupils have a good idea how they can improve, they are not always sure whether they are making as much progress as they should.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. However, the rate of improvement is increasing because the head teacher and his comparatively new senior leadership team have a clear view of the way ahead. They have already introduced new initiatives which are promoting good teaching and improved progress in lessons. These include the new cross-curricular, skills-based curriculum and the new tracking arrangements. The latter, however, have not been in place for long enough to show the success of improved teaching in higher test results. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school knows its strengths and areas for development. Action plans are increasingly based on shrewd analyses of weaknesses, although not all subject leaders are playing an equal part in school improvement. In addition, the senior staff and governors now ensure that the school's provision is measured by its outcomes, such as test results and pupils' progress. Governors work hard for the school and give valuable support, for example to developments in English, mathematics and science.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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	3
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**

15 December 2006

Dear Children

Fairfield Primary School, Toton Lane, Nottingham, NG9 7HB

We want to thank you very much for the way you welcomed us to your school recently and for being so polite and helpful. This made our job much easier and it was really nice to be in your school with you. We particularly want to thank those of you who spoke to us. It was good that you shared with us how you feel about being at Fairfield primary.

We think that your school is getting better and better. All the teachers and adults at your school care for and look after you well. Staff are always looking for ways they can make lessons more interesting and exciting so you can learn things and still have fun. We could see how much you enjoy school.

There are a few things that the school can do to get even better. We have asked Mr Howatson and the teachers to keep a very close eye on how well you are doing in your lessons to make sure that you are always improving, and that you know what to do to improve your work. We know that your teachers are particularly keen that you get better in your writing and we have asked them to help you in this very important part of your schoolwork. We have also asked the teachers responsible for all the subjects which you study, to pay special attention to how well you are doing as you go through the school to make sure you are doing as well as possible.

You can help by continuing to work hard to keep improving your writing skills to get them to be as good as you can. One other thing you can help with is that a small group of you are not always on your best behaviour. So if you know you might be amongst that small group, make a resolution to try to behave really well, starting next term. Enjoy your time at Fairfield and continue to work hard next year.

Ron Cohen

Lead inspector