

Fairfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124582
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293042
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Allison Coleman
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Reed
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002
School address	High Road West Felixstowe Suffolk IP11 9JB
Telephone number	01394 283206
Fax number	01394 283895

Age group	3-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized infant school. The prosperity and social make up of the area served by the school is mixed. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is below average. Skill levels on entry are broadly in line with that expected for three year olds. The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is below average and few speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average. The school has been awarded Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fairfield is correct to evaluate the quality of education it provides as good. It also provides good value for money. The nurturing of pupils' emotional and social development is given paramount importance and underpins the good academic progress they make. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes benefit greatly from the good provision made for their learning and make good progress. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years and 1 and 2. By the time they leave they attain standards that are above average. However, whilst pupils make the expected progress, standards in writing tend to lag behind those in reading and mathematics.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are exceptional and are based on the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils certainly enjoy their learning at Fairfield and behave exceptionally well because there are very effective behaviour management strategies in place. One said, 'I like everything at school, especially writing stories.' Another pupil commented, 'School is a challenge, but it's also lots of fun.' The school is outstanding at helping pupils to understand how to stay healthy and safe. It is also very effective at equipping pupils with the skills they need to be successful in their future education and in later life.

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching meets the needs of the full range of abilities in each class well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptional, helping pupils to become increasingly confident learners. The curriculum and range of additional activities are good and meet pupils' learning needs well.

Leadership and management are good. The main reason why the school meets the needs of its pupils well is based on the dedication and foresight of the headteacher, supported by a hardworking and effective staff. Governors also play their part effectively. They are very supportive and knowledgeable about the work of the school. They also play a significant part in evaluating its successes and considering how it might be improved. Parents hold the school in high regard. The comment made by one is typical of those made by many others in saying, 'Fairfield is a delightful school and the teaching is excellent.' Improvement since the last inspection is good, as is the school's capacity for continued improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing to bring them in line with the above average standards found in reading and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Skill levels on entry are close to that expected for children at that age. However, some aspects of their personal and social development and communication, language and literacy development, including their speaking and listening, are often at a lower than expected level. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and by the time they leave to begin Year 1, standards in all aspects of their learning are in line with the expected levels. Historically girls have often done better than boys. The school has taken effective action to improve the achievement of boys, to the extent that this is no longer the case. Good progress is sustained in Years 1 and 2 and, by the time pupils leave, standards in reading and mathematics are above average whilst standards in writing are broadly average. Pupils who have additional learning needs and those who speak English as an additional language

make exceptional progress. The school sets and invariably achieves challenging targets for attainment. Accurate teacher assessments, for pupils currently in Year 1, clearly indicate that by 2008 standards are on course to be well above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school rightly describes itself as 'friendly and welcoming'. Attendance is above average. Pupils' behaviour around the school and during lessons is exceptional. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies, art and design and music all make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Their social and emotional development is supported exceptionally well by the involvement of pupils in aromatherapy, massage and philosophical debate. These all have a calming effect and help pupils greatly to show care for each other. Pupils have a very good understanding of cultures that are different from their own. They also contribute very effectively to their community, for example by caring for the school grounds and by the choir singing at a nearby home for the blind. Pupils also give readily to charities, as typified by their generosity towards the Buhumba Primary School in Uganda.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are very aware of the learning needs of all their pupils and plan their lessons well to meet the full range of abilities. Teachers also have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They have very good awareness of pupils' preferred styles of learning and cater for these well. Relationships between teachers and pupils are exceptional, helping pupils to become increasingly confident learners. Teachers soon spot any pupils who lose concentration and ensure they are quickly on task. Teachers make effective use of questions to challenge and extend pupils' understanding and to improve their speaking and listening and their writing. Occasionally teachers do not make close enough links between what the pupils say and what they subsequently write. Consequently, the progress of some pupils in writing slows down. Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed accurately and teaching is modified as a result. The marking of pupils' work is detailed and thorough, providing them with valuable advice about how to improve. Teachers are also good at keeping pupils informed about how well they are doing and about what they need to do to improve. Because of this pupils are very clear about what they need to do to make their work even better. Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning, which is evident in the outstanding progress pupils with learning difficulties make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' learning needs well. Even so, it is currently being targeted by the school for continued improvement to find even more imaginative ways of making learning meaningful and interesting. The school also provides a good range of additional activities, which pupils enjoy. Excellent provision is made for pupils' personal, social and emotional education and for their health education. This provision includes a 'Nurture' club and the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme which provide outstanding

support for pupils who face social and emotional challenges. As a result pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils and their parents and carers are very confident about the level of care and safety provided by the school. There are robust arrangements to check that adults who work in the school are suitable for working with children. These arrangements, the procedures for child protection and assessment of potential areas of risk, fully meet with current requirements. Arrangements to track pupils' progress are thorough and detailed. The additional needs of pupils who potentially might under-achieve are identified at an early stage. Subsequently they receive very effective support through a range of intervention programmes that meet their learning needs well. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are supported exceptionally well. Arrangements to seek and respond to the views of parents, carers and pupils are good. An excellent programme of guidance is provided for parents and carers to help with their children's learning. Links with partner schools and agencies providing support for pupils are outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides a strong educational direction for the school. She is supported effectively by her deputy and by other staff with responsibilities, such as subject leaders. The headteacher has overseen the evolution of good systems to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the success of the school's performance, although this has yet to result in outstanding achievement. Nevertheless, the school is well placed to respond to any identified areas for development. All staff benefit greatly from good training opportunities. For instance, three teaching assistants are currently training to become teachers.

Governors do a good job. They meet all their statutory duties well. They are also knowledgeable about the work of the school, based on a well established programme of visits. Governors, in partnership with the headteacher, also ensure that best value is gained from the available resources and that pupils have all they need to learn successfully. This is typified by governors' careful oversight of improvements to the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The chair of governors rightly describes the school as, 'A family that works together to create the best outcomes for each child.'

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1

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	2
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	2
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?	1

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	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

7 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairfield Infant School, Felixstowe, IP11 9JB

Thank you for your kindness and help during my recent visit to inspect your school. I particularly enjoyed reading the welcome letters written by Year 2 pupils. I think you are very lucky to attend such a good school and I know that you agree. Your teachers and teaching assistants are good at giving you all the help you need to do well. I was very impressed to find that you all know about how to make your work even better. I was also very impressed by your behaviour and by the ways in which you all work hard and try to do your very best. The adults in your school are very good at taking care of you and I know you appreciate this very much. Mrs Reed and your school governors are very good at making sure that everything works smoothly and that you have all you need to learn successfully.

In order to help your writing to become even better I have asked the teachers to continue their work of helping you to produce the best writing that you possibly can.

I wish you every success during the remainder of your time at Fairfield and in your future education.

Well done!

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead Inspector