

Fairfield Endowed CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112806
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	298547
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caitlin Bisknell
Headteacher	Mrs Vicky Giliker
Date of previous school inspection	5 June 2006
School address	Boarstone Lane Fairfield Buxton Derbyshire SK17 7NA
Telephone number	01298 22551
Fax number	01298 22551

Age group	7-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds and all have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The percentage claiming entitlement to free school meals is above average. Since the previous inspection in June 2006, there has been a change in the leadership of the school. There is a new senior leadership team consisting of the new headteacher and two assistant headteachers. The healthy schools award was renewed in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school has improved significantly since a Notice to Improve was issued last year. A new headteacher, ably supported by two assistant headteachers, has quickly created a determined and unified approach to improving the performance of the school. There is a legacy of underachievement from past years, but national test results improved in 2007 and were broadly average overall and above average in English. Additionally, the proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 working at or exceeding the nationally expected levels has increased significantly and standards are currently above average. There has been satisfactory progress in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection. Inspection outcomes agree with the school's own assessment that its effectiveness is now satisfactory. It provides satisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Overall, achievement is satisfactory but there has been some variation in the performance of more-able pupils over the last two years. In 2006, the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science matched the national average and in English, it was below average. In 2007 the position reversed. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 in English exceeded the national average, but in mathematics and science, it was below. This is because there is variation in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Some teachers use assessment information well to set high levels of expectation and challenge for those pupils capable of achieving the higher levels, whereas this is an area for improvement in some lessons.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory because of satisfactory care, guidance and support. Pupils say that they enjoy school, but that sometimes lessons fail to interest them sufficiently. On these occasions, they lose attention and their behaviour deteriorates. Pupils learn well in the lessons that are challenging, exciting and in which they see a purpose to the learning. The headteacher and senior leadership team plan to develop a more stimulating and creative curriculum to add more interest and enjoyment to learning. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They say they feel safe in school and are pleased that the school listens to their ideas through the school council. The school has satisfactory links with the community, with support services and other schools to support pupils' education and achievement.

Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. The senior leadership team has a very clear view of where the school is going and the impact of their work is already evident in rising standards. Subject leaders have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses, but there is scope to strengthen their role in monitoring the effectiveness of provision in their subjects. Similarly, the governors do not conduct focused monitoring observations, linked to the school's priorities for improvement. Overall, self-evaluation is satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils of higher academic potential attain levels that are consistently in line with their abilities.
- Make sure that all teachers use assessment data effectively to raise the level of expectation and challenge for all pupils.
- Strengthen the monitoring role of subject leaders and governors.

- Provide more opportunity for pupils to develop skills, knowledge and understanding within an enriched and creative curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

Test results in 2007 showed continued improvement and were broadly average in mathematics and science, and above average in English, where a whole-school focus on writing has resulted in significant improvement. The performance of more-able pupils in mathematics and science tests was broadly satisfactory but above average in English. Current standards are above average with a significant increase in the proportion of present Year 6 pupils working at or beyond the nationally expected levels for their age. Overall progress and achievement through the key stage are satisfactory, but uneven over time. Assessment data shows some underachievement in the past, which is now balanced by better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils appreciate physical fitness and engage enthusiastically in the wide range of sports activities on offer. The extent to which they are keen to eat healthily is satisfactory. They understand the importance of keeping safe and consider the school a safe place to be. Most pupils behave well and enjoy school. Occasionally, some display inappropriate behaviour, particularly when activities are undemanding. Pupils say that the 'buddy bench' helps to make playtimes enjoyable social occasions. They relish opportunities to develop responsibility through, for example, participating in class assemblies. The school council displays a mature approach towards its increasing level of independence. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future well-being. Thanks to very effective monitoring, there has been a significant improvement in attendance, which has risen to average levels. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is satisfactory, and there are clear indications of improvement through the school, including some outstanding practice. Behaviour-management is effective and helps create a calm learning environment in lessons. Teachers deal with inappropriate behaviour consistently from class to class, with rewards and sanctions used uniformly to support pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils have a clear idea of teachers' expectations. The pace of lessons varies. Where it is brisk, pupils respond positively, are enthusiastic and enjoy learning. Where it slows, pupils lose concentration and behaviour deteriorates. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to make learning vivid and attainable. Planning of lessons is good. Some teachers use focused assessments at the beginning of units of work to group pupils according to what they already know and are able to match work to ability well. However, this does not yet happen in all classes. Teachers

evaluate what has been learned at the end of lessons and adjust plans to address areas that were not successful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent initiatives to target areas of weakness, such as the quality of pupils' writing, have resulted in a significant rise in standards. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education to help pupils' personal development and raise self-esteem. The school promotes health and fitness particularly well. A strong emphasis on sport, including good use of specialist coaching and a wide range of clubs, helps pupils to enjoy staying active and healthy. Numerous visits and visitors successfully bring the curriculum alive. Many pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, benefit from good support programmes but further work remains to ensure more-able pupils receive tasks with sufficient challenge. The school recognises the need to establish more and stronger links between subjects to provide an exciting, creative and enriched curriculum with greater opportunities to consolidate core skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Arrangements for pupils' pastoral care are good. Secure procedures for ensuring their safety, including child protection, are embedded in the school's work. Initiatives, such as 'positive play' and 'fair deal', enable vulnerable children to talk about their concerns and receive appropriate help. These initiatives, combined with a strong anti-bullying approach, have resulted in a fall in the number of exclusions. The school provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Satisfactory links with outside agencies and the wider community have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Systems for supporting academic achievement, although satisfactory and improving are still in their infancy. Thanks to the recent introduction of good tracking and target-setting procedures, staff and pupils have a clearer idea of progress. There is some way to go, however, before assessment information is used to best effect to provide the highest level of challenge for all pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory and better than at the time of the previous inspection. New leadership has made an effective start in improving the school's performance. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and identifies the main areas for improvement, which are clearly prioritised. The senior leadership team carefully monitors individual performance and holds teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their classes, set against the challenging but realistic targets that are set. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well coordinated, enabling them to be fully included and achieve as well as others. Governance of the school is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Governors have supported the new headteacher and leadership team well this year, and are now more challenging in their questions and show a greater understanding of performance indicators. However, there is scope for subject leaders and governors to strengthen their monitoring roles.

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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
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

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?	3

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield Endowed CofE Junior School, Buxton, SK17 7NA

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what it is like for you in school. We are pleased to be able to say that your school is improving. After a period in which standards were not as high as they should have been, there are real signs that things are getting better. Standards are now above average. There is still scope for some of you who are capable of doing harder work, to do even better. We have asked your teachers to help those pupils by providing harder work, and for all teachers to use any assessment information they keep about your work to expect more of all of you. We have also asked subject leaders and governors to keep a very careful eye on how well you are all doing.

We found your behaviour satisfactory. A few pupils still do not cooperate fully with teachers, and they could well help to make life more pleasant in school by concentrating better in lessons. This generally happens when they do not feel stimulated by lessons. You said you enjoy school most of the time, but that you find some lessons not exciting enough. We have asked your teachers to develop a more exciting curriculum, which links together subjects and gives you opportunities to learn within a range of exciting topics and themes.

The new headteacher, working very closely with the rest of the staff, has made a good start in improving the school. Standards are rising and the staff have some good ideas for the future. You can help by sharing your concerns and ideas for the school with your teachers and other adults working with you.

We both wish you well for the future

Yours sincerely,

David Speakman

Lead Inspector