

Fairway Primary School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101278
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307638
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Malcolm Johnstone

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	247
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	24
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Cox
Headteacher	Ms Jan Parker
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	27 November 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Fairway Mill Hill London NW7 3HS
Telephone number	020 8959 1177

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Inspection number	307638

Fax number

020 8201 0907

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most primary schools but offers a range of education and childcare provision for children aged two to 11. In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) there are 30 children in the Reception class and currently 38 in the 52 place Nursery class, which is situated in the Children's Centre close to the main school. There is also day-care provision for 51 children aged two to under five in the Children's Centre, most but not all of whom also attend the school's Nursery class. There is a 'Busy Bees' after-school club run by a private provider.

Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, the largest two groups being of Asian and African heritage with just over a quarter of pupils of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and has increased over the past three years. A small but increasing minority of pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition. There are 30 different languages spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social needs. An above average proportion of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is effective in meeting the increasingly diverse needs of its community. There is a strong commitment to the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, and this ensures that pupils are given good opportunities to succeed in a warm and caring environment. They enjoy learning and know how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Relationships and racial harmony are strong and behaviour is exemplary. The large majority of parents support the school in all aspects of its work. As one parent commented, 'The school provides a warm, loving and supportive environment for our children thereby promoting learning and confidence building.'

The school has successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection report. It is driven forward by good leadership and management and a shared vision and commitment to improvement. Good self-evaluation has identified the right priorities for development and the school has begun to work on these with some success. The school is well placed to improve further.

Standards and achievement are good for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The majority of children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are typically below those expected for their age. Provision in the EYFS is good overall, although there are some variations. In the Children's Centre and Nursery, overall provision is outstanding. This helps these children to make consistently rapid progress. The Children's Centre makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Provision in the Reception class is only satisfactory and the rapid progress children make in the Children's Centre is not maintained. As a result, overall progress across the EYFS is satisfactory.

Pupils' progress is mostly good in Years 1 to 6 and standards in reading, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. This reflects good achievement from the children's starting points. Standards in writing are not as high as in reading, mathematics and science and are broadly average. The development of basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), together with pupils' strong personal development, prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are good. Nonetheless, there is still a small proportion that is satisfactory and in these instances progress is not so rapid. There is scope to increase the proportion of teaching that is at least good and to provide more that is outstanding. In most lessons, teachers use tracking and assessment information successfully to ensure that work offers appropriate challenge and support for the different ability levels in their classes.

There is a good curriculum with a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. There is good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this helps them make good progress. Support for pupils who have English as an additional language is good and they too, progress well. The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Children's Centre is highly effective at making sure children's progress across the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes is consistently good, and exemplary in many elements. Children of all abilities and backgrounds get off to a flying start in their education. The Centre is outstandingly inclusive and is highly successful in meeting the needs of all children, whatever their abilities

or backgrounds. Throughout the Centre, teaching is consistently good and fosters a love of, and enjoyment in learning. There is a wide and stimulating range of experiences, for example, the soft play and multi-sensory areas engage the youngest children effectively in exploring and finding out about a new environment. The excellent links with outside providers benefit both children and parents. The high-quality leadership and management of the Centre, backed by an enthusiastic and supportive team, have ensured ongoing improvement since the previous inspection. Parents greatly value the provision, as is shown by their comments and responses to the questionnaire. Safeguarding and keeping safe have a very high priority and systems fully meet requirements. Leadership of the Nursery and Reception is good. The new leader has quickly built an excellent relationship with the children and adults and is working successfully to fine-tune the tracking and assessment of children's progress. Plans for the future are well targeted to bring about even further improvement to the provision and outcomes for children.

Teaching in the Reception class is satisfactory but lacks the pace and inspiration seen in the Children's Centre. As a result, the rapid progress made by children in the Children's Centre is not maintained, and children's progress slows to a satisfactory level. There are missed opportunities to maximise the learning opportunities in free-play activities and the use of assessment is not sharp enough to ensure a good match of work to the different needs of the children. By the time they leave the Reception class, a minority of children do not attain all the early learning goals expected for children of this age, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school to the level of those attained in reading, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the provision in the Reception class is good so that children achieve well.
- Raise the quality of teaching so that an even greater proportion is good or outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 6, the school has successfully maintained overall standards at above average levels for the past few years. Challenging targets have been met, and between Years 1 and 6, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make mostly good progress in relation to their capabilities and starting points. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved over the past year. They were below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2006 and 2007. They are now broadly average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Good improvements in writing are showing in pupils' current work, but across the school, standards in writing are not yet high enough. The school recognises this. More opportunities are being provided for pupils to develop spelling, grammar and punctuation systematically and to use these skills to produce extended pieces of writing that are more meaningful and relevant to their own experiences. Pupils make good progress in the development of ICT skills and use these skills successfully to support work in other subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, and this is reflected in their good attendance. They have good attitudes to their work and try their best to succeed. Behaviour is excellent in most lessons, and on formal occasions such as assemblies. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire support this

view. Pupils are polite and courteous to visitors. They say that they feel safe at school and are confident a member of staff will support them if they have any worries or concerns. They report that the rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for one another regardless of their cultural or religious background. The adults in the school value pupils' opinions and ideas. Pupils have good awareness of how to keep safe and know what makes a healthy lifestyle. The 'Eco' School Council makes an effective contribution to the school community. Pupils are proud of the extra responsibilities they undertake as class, school and playground monitors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. While most of the teaching is good, there is a small proportion that is satisfactory. In the large majority of lessons, the pace of learning is good and the teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their involvement in the activities leads to consistently good progress. Relationships are strong and teamwork is good. Teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils and have a good impact on the progress they make. There are good opportunities for pupils to work individually, in pairs and in small groups. This practice is successful in establishing independence and cooperative learning skills. In some lessons there are weaknesses in the timings of the various parts of the lesson so that, for example, introductions go on too long, meaning that the final part, in which the learning is evaluated, is rushed. Effective specialist teachers for physical education and music enable pupils to progress well in these subjects. In the most effective lessons, assessment information is used well to ensure that work matches effectively the needs of the different abilities in the classes. This use of assessment information is not so strong in the less successful lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is highly successful in promoting pupils' personal, social and emotional development. This helps pupils to gain a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the school community. There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, the arts and environmental work. Residential and day educational visits into the community add a further effective dimension to the curriculum. Whole-school themed days and weeks, such as 'Enterprise' and book weeks, constitute an extra and relevant addition to learning. The school is currently extending a more exciting approach to curricular planning in order to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills in support of work in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and supported. There is very high-quality care for vulnerable pupils. Pupils who have social and emotional needs receive highly effective support from teachers and skilled teaching assistants. Adults know their pupils very well and provide them with outstanding personal and pastoral support. There are effective arrangements for child protection and conscientious risk assessments. Pupils'

academic guidance is good and has improved over the past year. Pupils' performance is tracked well and ensures that additional support is targeted where it is most needed. Pupils have personal targets to aim for in literacy and numeracy, and teachers communicate success criteria to the pupils. This helps them to assess how well they are doing. There is good marking that includes developmental comments on pupils' work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership of the headteacher, deputy, senior leaders and subject coordinators is good. A shared view of the school and the direction in which it is going has been developed well with all staff. The good school improvement plan provides a clear course of action. The school has a good track record of success in maintaining good standards by the time pupils leave the school. Good improvements in the evaluation of the extensive tracking and assessment data have been led by the new deputy headteacher. This has led to accurate identification of any pupils who should be doing better and has enabled additional support to be provided. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has been successful in bringing improvement, for example, in the teaching of reading and most recently, in the teaching of writing. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and have a reasonable understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Many, including the chairperson are new and are not yet active or rigorous enough in holding the school to account for the quality of education it provides.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

02 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairway Primary School and Children's Centre, London, NW7 3HS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were polite and helpful throughout the inspection and told us lots of useful things about your school. We agree with you that Fairway is a good school. Your behaviour was excellent and it was good to see how well you all get on together. We were most impressed with the Children's Centre and all the exciting things that are happening there. Your teachers and other adults who work in school, care very much about you and work hard to help you succeed and keep safe. It was good to see how much you know about healthy eating and the importance of a keeping fit and healthy. Many of your lessons help you to make good progress and we were impressed with how you always try to do your best. You do really well with your reading, mathematics and science. Your writing is improving but we think it could be better. By the time you leave Year 6, you are well prepared for moving on to secondary school.

The headteacher and governors know what they need to do to make yours an even better school. We have asked them to:

- continue to help you improve your writing
- make sure that the Reception children are given the same good opportunities provided in the Nursery and Children's Centre
- make even more of your lessons as good as the best, so that you make even faster progress.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Johnstone

Lead Inspector