

Fairfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105287
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308819
Inspection date	29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	264
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Miller
Headteacher	Mr C Ashley
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
School address	Rochdale Old Road Bury Lancashire BL9 7SD
Telephone number	0161 7641559
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own records, policies and observation of the school at work, discussions with staff and children, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Fairfield Community Primary school is larger than average. The proportion of children eligible for a free school meal is above average. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language is low. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school holds the Sport England Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award. It also has the Basic Skills Quality Mark and this year attained the Arts Council Artsmark.

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 with some outstanding features. Children's personal development is outstanding. They take pride in their school, have excellent relationships with their teachers and other adults and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect where achievement is celebrated and valued. Children take great pride in their achievement and during their time in the school they develop a real love of learning. They particularly enjoy sharing with others what they learn in their Family assemblies. Younger children say they are excited and inspired by the achievements of older children. Children confidently express their views. They value the wide range of opportunities they have, such as the school council and as playground leaders, to take responsibility and make decisions. Behaviour is excellent. Much of this is because the quality of the care and guidance they receive is excellent. The school goes to great lengths to ensure that all children achieve well and parents and carers greatly value this. Adults in the school know the children in their care very well indeed. The progress of individuals, including children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is closely tracked and appropriate targets set. These targets are clearly understood by the children and they talk in detail about how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They make sensible choices about healthy living. The school follows government guidelines to ensure pupils' safety and the safe recruitment of staff. Attendance is above average and further reflects children's enjoyment of school.

Throughout the school, most pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in science, mathematics and English. In the Year 2 teacher assessments in 2007, standards were significantly above average in mathematics and writing. In reading they were average. Action taken by the school to raise standards and to promote the love of reading is proving very successful and children now read fluently and with enthusiasm.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and ensures children achieve well. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They present ideas clearly and in a way that interests children. As a result, they rapidly understand new ideas. Assessment information is used effectively to meet pupils' individual needs in lessons and to ensure their good progress. However, in some lessons, although teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support for lower attaining children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, there is scope to challenge higher attainers more effectively. In the most effective lessons, questioning is used very well to explore new ideas, enable all children to respond successfully and to extend their learning. Children make the best progress when they explore ideas for themselves, or in cooperation with others, through practical activities.

Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of all children well. Positive strategies to improve children's attitudes towards reading have proved successful and have had a positive impact upon raising standards. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities to learn a musical instrument and to learn French. There is also a wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits which add significantly to pupils' academic progress and personal development. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support and extend learning.

Leadership and management are outstanding. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection, in provision for outdoor play and in ICT. There is very clear direction shared by all staff. Teachers and other adults work very effectively as a team. All staff are involved in the school's self-evaluation and in improvement planning. These are based closely upon the rigorous and regular analysis of assessment data. The school sets itself challenging targets, is successful

in meeting them and is continually striving to improve standards further. It is very prompt in identifying areas of relative weakness and shows an unwavering determination to tackle them. Standards in science have improved over the last two years and are now significantly above average. Similarly, actions taken to improve reading have been particularly successful and standards are now above average. The school works very effectively with other institutions, outside agencies and with parents and carers, to ensure all children achieve well. Governors provide strong support. The school provides good value for money and has an excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. Staff plan creative and interesting activities very carefully. The different needs of individual children are very carefully considered and activities are closely matched to the next steps in their learning for each child. This detailed and sensitive planning leads to rapid learning in an exciting atmosphere, both in the Nursery and Reception classes. When they join the school, standards are below expectations and for many children, their social and communication skills are particularly weak. Strategies used to improve these skills are very effective and are the focus of all activities. Every opportunity is taken to engage children in discussion and they learn to enjoy reading from the outset. As a result, children make excellent progress, particularly in their personal development and in speaking and listening. They enter Year 1 confident, articulate and with a love of learning.

Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage are outstanding. Target-setting is clearly focused upon the needs of each child. Close checks on progress celebrate milestones reached by individuals and ensure very smooth transition from one class to the next. As a result, most achieve the expected learning goals for their age by the start of Year 1. The environment is stimulating, calm and orderly. Children have excellent relationships with each other and their teachers and are keen to learn and behave well. They treat each other kindly and enjoy participating in group activities. Their welfare is promoted very well, based on good links with parents and very strong leadership and management.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment information in Years 1 to 6 in order to challenge the higher attaining children more effectively in lessons.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. I particularly enjoyed attending your Family assembly and seeing how you shared what you had learned with others. I was really impressed with how confident you all were in giving your presentations, and how interesting and well prepared they were.

I am sure you will not be surprised to know that your school is a good one with some things that are excellent. I was particularly impressed by the really good way you get on with each other and your teachers. You told me how much you enjoy your lessons and it was easy to see why. Teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.

You are very well looked after and your teachers know very well how each of you is getting on. They give you excellent guidance and you all know exactly what you must do to improve your work. I have asked that when teachers plan their lessons they all make sure the highest attaining children are able to make as much progress as they can, because sometimes they find their work too easy. I expect you know that your teachers work very hard to think up new ideas and make things better. The system for borrowing books is working very well and you told me how much you enjoyed your reading and being able to take books home. You are also very lucky to have so many clubs and activities after school as well as visits outside school.

I am confident that you will help your teachers to make sure your school continues to be successful and a happy place to be and to learn.

I wish you every success in the future.