

Fairfield Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115904
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312099
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Anthony Green

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Sanders
Headteacher	Mrs B J France
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Fairfield Road Havant PO9 1AY
Telephone number	0239 248 3029
Fax number	0239 249 2324

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school serves a highly diverse area. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. Over half of the pupils come from outside the local area. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. In the last two years staff mobility at all levels has been very high. The Victorian building has been adapted very effectively and attractively.

The school has gained a number of national and local awards including Investors in People, Active Mark, Enhanced Healthy Schools status and the Hampshire award as a Green Trailblazer.

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. The effective headteacher has been extremely successful in creating a culture where pupils thrive and thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding, as is their care, guidance and support. The school's mission statement includes, 'We make learning fun, relevant, active and creative'. It succeeds well in these aims.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a rich and varied curriculum that interests them. From their relatively low starting points pupils make good progress and reach standards that are broadly average by the time they leave. However, pupils do not do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. The school recognises that this is an area for development. The 'Trailblazer' initiative adds relevance and interest to a wide range of subjects, through the stimulus of outdoor activities. This reinforces pupils' basic skills well, is contributing to a rise in standards of writing, and is a strength of the curriculum. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities in all subjects for pupils to practise and improve their writing.

Pupils behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. They have excellent attitudes to learning and attendance is good. Pupils enjoy talking to visitors about their work and are proud of their achievements. They have a remarkably good understanding for their age about living healthily. One said, 'We are not allowed chocolate because it is not good. We always bring fruit because it is healthy'. Pupils feel staff listen to them and act on their suggestions. The school council has a very good impact on the life of the pupils. For example, they have introduced playground games and rules for the safe use of the activity trail and the quiet zone. This is also recognised by parents. One wrote, 'The development of the playground facilities has been very good, and has a positive impact at playtimes'. There are very good systems in place to identify and support the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Consequently, they make good progress towards their targets. Pupils also benefit from some excellent links with external agencies.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has been very successful in guiding the school through a long period of staff turbulence, including not having a deputy headteacher. She has maintained the good achievement of pupils through this period and the high quality of teamwork and commitment. The very recent appointment of a new deputy, and new members to the senior leadership team, means that the school is now in a strong position to move forward. In particular through their monitoring of teaching they are beginning to further raise standards, though not all of the new management team have had the opportunity to monitor in the classroom.

The majority of parents are pleased with the work of the school. However, a significant minority expressed concern that pupils are not allowed water bottles, that the reading scheme is not sufficiently robust and that there is a lack of information to parents. The inspection team found no evidence to support these comments.

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection. For example, it has raised standards in pupils' speaking and listening skills and is developing pupils' independence through the new curriculum. It is accurate in its self-evaluation and there is a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding lower than expected for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy. Most settle quickly and make a good start because of the rich curriculum and good teaching. Pupils achieve well, though standards remain slightly lower than expected by the end of the Reception year. Pupils' personal development and well-being are very good. They are encouraged to develop their skills of independent learning through well-organised and practical activities. Although new, the quality of leadership and management in the Foundation Stage is good. This is because it is successfully maintaining and developing the already good provision, and is ensuring consistency of good teaching, and equality of opportunity between the three classes. Children enjoy a diverse range of activities outside, even though space is fairly restricted. All children, including those with behavioural or learning difficulties, are cared for, guided and supported extremely well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop more planned opportunities in all subjects for pupils to practise their writing skills.
- Ensure that the new members of the senior management team are given opportunities and support, to develop their roles in raising achievement, especially in writing, and improving teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average and achievement is good. The inspection shows that standards are rising but the effects of new curriculum initiatives, and the more consistent teaching after the recent staff changes, have yet to show in results. In English, there are strengths in reading but weaknesses in writing, where pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence construction is below expectations. The school has already identified writing as an area for future development. In mathematics, pupils' understanding of number work and problem solving are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. Overall, the good progress in pupils' basic skills, together with their very positive attitudes to learning, ensures that pupils are well prepared for junior school and the world beyond.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils clearly enjoy school. They speak about it very positively and can think of very little they would change. They are extremely polite, confident and willing to help others. They show outstanding levels of personal development when acting as lunch time helpers, assisting younger children to cut their food, and are very responsible in their approach to playground duties. Pupils have increasing independence and responsibility for their learning, for example, through developing their drama skills outdoors, where they work independently of an adult. They have a very good knowledge of how to stay safe. As part of the school's commitment to healthy lifestyles, every class has a water fountain. In addition to the standards of basic skills such as ICT, the pupils are well prepared for later life because of their good achievement, growing independence and very good care and consideration of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Very good relationships throughout the school successfully maintain pupils' excellent behaviour and motivation for learning. Interactive technology adds interest and impact to lessons. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the high levels of praise and rewards. Although developments in the curriculum are increasing pupils' active involvement in lessons, on occasions introductions are too long and so the pace of learning slows. Well-informed teaching assistants are not always used effectively at these times to support teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It engages all pupils well. Throughout the school the provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is good. The very good range of books means that there is a suitable breadth of material to engage and challenge pupils' reading. Planned opportunities for writing are now being developed through the new curriculum but are not yet fully embedded. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. Very good links with the local secondary school, through a sports' partnership, supports the school's initiatives in physical education. Personal, social and health education is well planned and very effectively makes pupils aware of staying safe and healthy. They are developing their awareness of what makes a good citizen through, for example, fund raising activities and their contribution to the annual and "Strawberry Fayreand". The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are given outstanding care, guidance and support. Systems to secure pupils' health and safety are extremely robust and reviewed regularly. Appropriate arrangements are in place for child protection. Difficulties with behaviour or learning are identified early and supported very well. Assessments are thorough and parents and pupils are well informed of progress and the next steps for learning. Pupils find targets helpful. The 'Cool board' in each class shows them how they can 'carry on our learning'. Pupils often mark each other's work. This helps to them to identify strengths in the work of other pupils and to reflect more deeply on their own work. Very informative newsletters and regular meetings offer parents the opportunity to learn more about, and respond to, any initiatives.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher, the management of the school has been maintained despite high staff mobility at all levels. There is a strong commitment by teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure that the day-to-day life of the school runs smoothly for the benefit of the pupils. The new deputy headteacher,

and the senior management team, show a strong desire to move the school forward. However, they have all yet to monitor teaching and learning. The school development plan is well focused on raising standards, especially in writing. This is already being achieved by the new curriculum.

Governance is good. Procedures for the induction of new governors are good. They are well informed and bring a range of skills to the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for development. They closely monitor and evaluate performance and provide good challenge to school leaders.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
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?	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 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

10 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield Infant School, Havant, PO9 1AY

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out what you like. We agree with you that you go to a good school. These are some of things we especially liked.

- You make good progress in your work.
- Teaching is good and teachers make lessons fun for you.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you look after one another very well.
- The school takes great care of you and makes sure that you are happy and safe.
- There are lots of interesting and exciting things for you to do. We were very impressed by your outdoor 'Trailblazing' work.
- The school is led and managed well. Your headteacher, staff and governors work hard to see that you have every opportunity to do your best.

Even in a good school there are things that could be even better.

- We have asked your teachers to help you improve your writing by giving you more opportunities to write in your lessons.
- We have asked that your new deputy headteacher, and the other teachers who help to manage the school, are given time and support to carry out their new roles.

We wish you the very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Green

Lead inspector