

Fairfield Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112699
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325668
Inspection date	5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Joanne Harvey

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	216
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stuart Percival
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Coackley
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bench Road Fairfield Buxton Derbyshire SK17 7PQ
Telephone number	0129822441
Fax number	0129822441

Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Is achievement at least good and often exceptional and are standards exceptionally and consistently high?
- Are there significant outstanding features across all areas of provision?
- Have the school leaders been overly cautious in their judgement regarding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff and governor representatives. In addition, there was observation of parts of several lessons, scrutiny of school information and its self-evaluation statement, analysis of samples of pupils' work, evaluation of parents' questionnaires, and discussions with pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found 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

This is an average sized school on the outskirts of Buxton. Nearly all pupils come from the local area and are from White British backgrounds. A higher than average number of pupils are eligible to claim free school meals. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found in most schools. The school is well established as part of a Children's Centre. It has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, an Anti-Bullying Award, an ActiveMark and the Healthy Schools Award.

The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery and two Reception classes though these work as one unit. Funding for the Early Years Foundation Stage is both direct and through the school's budget.

Additional childcare provision is available on the school site that includes a day nursery and an out-of-school club. The school's governing body does not manage these settings and therefore they are reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective school where pupils make exceptional progress from low starting points. Because provision made for the pupils is outstanding in every way, by the time they leave the school, not only do they attain very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics, but also their personal achievements are exceptional. There are also outstanding arrangements to ensure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are appropriately supported and thus make extremely good progress.

The school's success arises from the remarkably clear vision and purpose shared by the headteacher, governors and the caring and committed staff team. This results from the outstanding leadership and strong direction given by the headteacher, supported by her able senior leadership team. The desire to raise aspirations and increase opportunities for success for pupils, their families and the local community lies at the core of all of the school's work. It is no surprise therefore, that all pupils make exceptional progress whilst they are at the school. Whatever the individual need, talent or possible barrier to learning that they may bring with them, they achieve standards that are well above those achieved by their peers in most other schools.

The extremely positive ethos and happy family atmosphere are evident on entering the school. The environment provided for the pupils is bright and stimulating. It is also challenging and at the same time nurturing, so pupils become well-rounded individuals. Parents are highly appreciative of the school. One wrote 'I am very happy with everything at this school. It is brilliant!' This comment represents the views of many who responded to the questionnaire. Pupils echo this sentiment in their demonstration of exceptional levels of enjoyment and good attendance. As one parent wrote 'In a morning, it's a nice sight to see when the children can't get through the door quick enough and Mrs Coackley has to ask them just to wait a minute while she opens the door properly!'

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept responsibilities, allowing them to grow in confidence. They show respect and empathy and take pride in helping others and in looking after each other, their school and the environment beyond. They take their jobs around school very seriously and really make a difference to the smooth running of the school. They are often the catalyst for, or at the forefront of community events. For example, performing at the Buxton Opera House or producing a spectacular prize winning carnival float. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and how to keep themselves and each other safe. The combination of excellent literacy and numeracy skills and their highly developed personal skills equips pupils extremely well for the next stage of education and life.

Providing outstanding care and guidance is central to the school's ethos and includes systems for ensuring high levels of health, safety and welfare. A sample of documents inspected confirmed that safeguarding procedures meet with requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and are confident that there is always someone to help them with any problems. Adults go the extra mile to ensure the pupils' well-being, reduce any barriers to learning and make sure that everyone is included in everything that the school has to offer. For example, there is a plethora of partnerships with specialist outside agencies and the wonderfully calming sensory room offers excellent nurture and time for contemplation.

Teaching has many outstanding features. Relationships are extremely positive, resulting in pupils being confident, keen to work hard and behaving exceptionally well. Everyone lives the Golden Rules! Importantly, pupils learn how to make sensible choices about what they can do to help themselves do as well as they can. Teachers encourage collaborative working highly successfully to share expertise and speed up the progress of everyone. Highly effective strategies to promote good behaviour ensure that the behaviour of the very few who find this hard to achieve without additional support never impinges on the smooth running of lessons. Excellent subject knowledge and detailed knowledge of each pupil's needs informs the planning of activities. This is supplemented by incisive questioning which challenges children to think for themselves. Those who find learning more difficult get excellent support, both individually and in groups, from extremely able teaching assistants. This is underpinned by excellent deployment of additional resources, so these pupils also achieve extremely well. Teachers provide practical, hands-on and problem-solving activities in order to engage all pupils even further, and this is working particularly well for boys. The pupils themselves are involved to a remarkable degree in planning for their future learning. Systems to provide academic guidance are outstanding. They are based on regular and rigorous checks on the pupils' progress, which is carefully tracked and the information collected used to set individual and group targets, focus resources and ensure that everyone does as well as they can.

The outstanding curriculum is creative and exciting with several subjects being taught together through meaningful topic themes. This approach is well embedded across the school and results in the pupils being highly motivated and engaged with their learning and making rapid progress. A parent volunteered that their child 'often returns from school talking about something that has captured his imagination'. A carefully thought out programme of personal, social and health education successfully helps to encourage the pupils' remarkable personal skills. Pupils enjoy a range of additional clubs that go beyond the required subjects. These help to develop important life skills and pupils say they enjoy them because they help them to learn to do many things even better. Some clubs offer opportunities for parents and children to be engaged together and some, such as the cookery club, are so popular that there is a waiting list! Further enrichment includes relevant visits out and visitors to school with excellent use of community partners, such as the emergency or health services and community facilities including museums and art galleries. However, school leaders and staff say they will not be content until the school is recognised as a centre for innovation and excellence. They believe there is even more scope for the further personalisation of learning and the further development of the pupils' ability to take the lead in making decisions about their learning and lives. Having recently won considerable funding through 'Creative Partnerships', they are about to embark on the next stage of curriculum and school development, with the pupils taking the lead, to plan a new curriculum and indeed to plan how the learning environment and school should ideally be organised.

Leadership and management is outstanding because everyone plays their full part in checking on the effectiveness of the school's work. They share the same accurate view and high aspirations and enthusiasm for continued success. Systems to ensure that challenging targets continue to be set and met are robust and well known to everyone. One parent summed this up appropriately when saying, 'Mrs Coackley and all the staff are dedicated to their job and to the school, and this shines through in the day to day running of the school.' Governors offer a good deal of practical support, know the school extremely well and play a full strategic role in analysing its work and providing challenge to school leaders. The school places itself at the heart of its community, successfully reaching out and forging very positive and highly effective partnerships

with parents and outside agencies, too numerous to mention. As a fully extended school, it promotes harmony and positive community action extremely well. Careful planning is in place, including becoming part of the 'School's Linking' network, to extend this work in partnership with other schools in the UK and beyond in order to develop more fully all stakeholders understanding and positive attitudes to diversity in the UK and global communities. In preparation, the school has recently held a European week and through the British Council, staff have visited schools in India and Russia, bringing back experiences and artefacts for all to share.

Outstanding and innovative leadership have ensured that the school has gone from strength to strength since the last inspection. It provides excellent value for money and an outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children do extremely well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because their welfare and learning and development needs are met exceptionally well. They settle quickly and feel secure because of the excellent support and knowledge of staff who get to know them very well, and because parents are well included in the learning process through the outstanding relationships which are formed. Exciting activities and topic themes are carefully planned, based on an accurate knowledge of the children's progress and needs and an excellent understanding of the EYFS curriculum and of how young children learn. These are delivered in a truly creative and integrated way with children getting many meaningful opportunities to revisit and experiment with their learning in different ways. Consequently, and in combination with outstanding teaching, children make outstanding progress from low starting points and are on target to exceed the standards expected of them by the time they enter Year 1. Adults are skilled at knowing when to give children time to discover and explore their own ideas or when to give them more direction or intervene with questions that challenge them. All staff make the most of opportunities during the children's purposeful play to extend learning. The children's personal development is remarkable, with independence being established and responsibility for resources being taken right from the start. A high quality of care and welfare is assured, with all the requirements being met, and children also being taught successfully how to minimise risks for themselves. Leadership is outstanding and shared to a great extent and being astutely grown by the headteacher within the setting. Leaders are well on their way to achieving their detailed plan to develop further the provision outdoors for Reception children to the quality of that already found in the Nursery. It is only that this has not yet been fully completed that has led them to be overly cautious in their own judgement about the overall effectiveness of the setting.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to build on the innovative and creative approach to empowering the pupils in leading their own learning and maximising their skills to achieve even greater success in the future.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

6 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairfield Infant and Nursery School, Buxton, SK17 7PQ.

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

There are many outstanding things about your school. Some of them are that:

- you achieve very high standards and make excellent progress
- you behave extremely well and work hard to help others
- your knowledge of how to keep yourself healthy and safe is outstanding
- you enjoy school a great deal and the school is good at organising interesting things for you to do
- all of the adults in your school make sure that you are extremely well cared for and looked after
- your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are highly effective at making sure that you get an outstanding education.

We agree with your parents that you go to an outstanding school. However, all of the adults in your school want it to be even better. We agree with them that the most important thing for them to do next is:

- continue to build on the exciting work they are doing with you to help you plan and create your ideal school.

We are sure that the headteacher and all the other staff will continue to do everything they can to help you. You can play your part by continuing to behave so well, working really hard and coming to school every day.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joanne Harvey

Lead inspector