

Fairfields Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117334
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	326577
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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)	479
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	1
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lisa Mundy
Headteacher	Mr Martin Tuck
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rosedale Way Cheshunt Waltham Cross Hertfordshire EN7 6JG

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two Reception classes, a Nursery class and Little Fields which is a pre-school group for younger three year olds. The governing body manages this provision along with an on site breakfast club and both were included as part of this inspection. Some pupils attend an after school club at a neighbouring school which was not part of this inspection.

Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and nine pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have dyslexia, speech and language difficulties or behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage their skills and knowledge are broadly as expected for their age, although this is not the case for all children. The school has gained National Healthy School status, Investors in People, the Sports Activemark, and the Basic Skills Award.

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 excellent school. It has maintained its very high quality over recent years. Parents cannot praise it highly enough. Typical of many, one wrote 'Fairfields is an outstanding school that actively encourages parental involvement. I could not have chosen a better school.' The pupils agree saying, 'this is a very happy school where we are well looked after.'

Leadership and management are excellent. The outstanding leadership of the long standing headteacher, his deputy and senior staff contributes very strongly to the high standards. The school monitors, evaluates and improves all it does to ensure its high quality. For example, last year they identified that not as many pupils exceeded the level expected for their age in mathematics, particularly in Year 2, and introduced strategies to address this. Consequently, this year many more pupils are expected to exceed the expected level in both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is excellent. From broadly typical starting points, children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and through the school. Assessments show that standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 are and have been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high with almost all pupils reaching or exceeding the expected level for their age. Almost half the pupils in Year 6 are on course to do better than expected for their age in English and science.

There are several reasons for this. For example, this year the school reviewed its provision for pupils who find it hard to learn and rearranged its support to benefit all pupils. Consequently, standards are rising and pupils who find it hard to learn make excellent progress. Teaching is outstanding. Brisk, challenging lessons and excellent use of questions encourage pupils to think. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning and talk willingly about their next steps. The outstanding curriculum motivates pupils who thoroughly enjoy all it offers. Extensive sports, including a very wide range of unusual extra curricular activities such as capoeira, a Brazilian martial arts and dance activity, contribute very positively to their excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and a thirst for knowledge that is unusual for their age. Every pupil is important and receives exceptional support, care and guidance. This contributes very positively to their outstanding personal development. However, there is room to further improve on the already very good marking which occasionally varies in quality in some classes. Pupils' mature behaviour is exemplary. They make an outstanding contribution to the community through their buddy groups, play leader roles and the many opportunities to help others less fortunate than themselves.

There is a tangible sense of team spirit. Subject leaders fulfil their management roles extremely well and have an excellent understanding of their subjects. The governors are valued members of the team and are strongly committed to providing the best possible education for the pupils, including the pre-school club. The school's accurate self evaluation, the very effective leadership of the headteacher and the outstanding teaching indicates that the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery class from the Little Fields pre-school, as well as from other settings. Children from Little Fields are very well prepared for entry to school. Overall, attainment on

entry to the Nursery varies, but is broadly in line with expected levels. The very rich, varied and exciting activities enable children to make rapid progress so that by the end of Reception they are working securely within the early learning goals. Outstanding achievement is particularly evident in areas such as linking sounds and letters, writing and knowledge and understanding of the world. Staff use questions that encourage children to think and provide excellent opportunities for them to explore and learn through play. Children freely access the excellent outdoor environment. The balance between learning through play led by adults and play initiated by the children is good, and often excellent.

Exemplary care leads to outstanding personal development. Children behave extremely well and benefit from secure friendships with their peers, as well as excellent relationships with staff. All are very well catered for and the progress of each child is carefully tracked. Leadership is outstanding, creating a very strong sense of team work across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Relationships with parents are particularly strong, with a number commenting upon the complete trust they place in the Early Years staff team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all marking comes up to that of the best so that it helps pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school's own data and inspection evidence show that all pupils, including those who find it hard to learn, make excellent progress and their attainment is outstanding. In 2008, teachers' assessments show that standards for pupils in Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion exceeding the expected level was above average in reading and science and a little below in mathematics. Test results for pupils in Year 6 were above average in English and mathematics and broadly average in science. The proportion exceeding the expected level was above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards at Year 6 have been significantly above average in English in recent years apart from a dip in 2008 which was due to regular absences from some pupils which adversely affected their learning. Teacher assessments in Year 6 demonstrate that there has been a considerable increase in standards, particularly in science, during the present year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. An excellent example of pupils developing a sense of social awareness was seen in a highly engaging assembly on 'litter bugs'. They thrive on opportunities for responsibility such as being play leaders or in the Eco team. Their understanding of the multi-cultural diversity of our society is excellent. They raise funds for charities, such as the Salvation Army by publishing a recipe book compiled by pupils in Year 3. Pupils are extremely courteous and friendly. Enjoyment of school is exceptional and relationships are excellent. As one pupil commented, 'I love coming to this school, because I have so many good friends.' Pupils feel very safe in school and understand their role in helping to ensure the safety of others. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, reflected in the Healthy School status and the very high take up of the many sporting opportunities. Healthy choices at lunchtime and break time show that pupils put their understanding into practice. Through the work of the school council, pupils express views

confidently and help bring about changes, such as purchasing new play equipment. Pupils learn to think for themselves and this, together with high standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, ensures that the contribution made to their future economic well-being is outstanding. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers plan exciting and motivating activities so that pupils make excellent strides in their learning. Teachers use questions very effectively to discover what pupils know. They use these responses very successfully to consolidate previous learning, clarify new ideas and to move pupils rapidly on to more challenging work. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were effectively engaged in learning to investigate the number of diagonals in a polygon. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to apply the skills they are taught. All teachers establish a strong rapport with pupils and this generates a secure environment where pupils can try out new ideas with confidence. Teachers have very high expectations and enable pupils to enjoy learning by adopting a wide range of methods and using interactive whiteboards effectively. From Year 1, pupils are taught mathematics in sets from across the classes according to their abilities. This enables teachers to match activities very closely to their needs and contributes positively to the rising standards. A similarly effective arrangement is in place in Year 1 and Year 2 for literacy. Support staff help pupils of all abilities and contribute to their exemplary progress. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. They successfully develop the research skills and techniques that pupils need to work effectively on their own.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent and enriched curriculum meets the needs of all pupils exceptionally well because it is based on what makes them want to learn. It encourages them to cooperate very well and motivates them to meet challenging targets. Care is taken to ensure progression and consistency in the way work is presented. There are excellent links between subjects, for example linking science and mathematics by tasting Mexican food and making graphs of their favourites. Most projects link literacy, drama, art and craft activities together creatively. Art is a particular strength as illustrated by the beautiful masks from different cultures and the spectacular clay work. A very well planned programme of social and health education ensures that pupils know how to be healthy and safe. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including golf at the Breakfast Club, 'speed stacking' and the Nature Club, motivate pupils and promote their enjoyment for learning. A visit from a Hindu woman during the inspection greatly enhanced pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Hindu culture.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is very strongly committed to the well-being and personal development of each pupil. Those who are at risk or who need additional support are identified early and very effective strategies to meet their needs are put in place. This is a major factor in their excellent

achievement. Rigorous procedures ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils. Safeguarding procedures meet the current requirements. Teaching assistants, alongside teachers, play a vital part in ensuring such high quality provision. Pupils speak confidently about the many trusted adults they can turn to for help and support. Bullying is not a concern and they know that any incidents will be dealt with quickly. The school has excellent partnerships with outside agencies to promote pupils' well being. Excellent systems for tracking progress allow teachers to match work closely to pupils' needs and information gained is used effectively to set challenging targets for improvement. Pupils are very familiar with what they need to do to improve because they are involved in setting their own targets. Work is very well marked and often gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve although the quality of the comments vary between the classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher shows a very strong commitment to the continual improvement of the school. The well-being of the pupils and their families is at the heart of all he does. Never complacent, he continually helps his staff to share and improve their practice to make this excellent school even better. The governors, deputy headteacher and senior team actively support this vision. The governors know that their decision to take responsibility for the management of Little Fields pre-school club has a beneficial effect on introducing children and their parents to the school. They have an excellent understanding of their role with regard to strategic development and providing outstanding support and challenge for the school. All staff, including subject leaders, fulfil their management roles extremely well. A particular strength is the way that the headteacher and deputy monitor sets of books each week in a particular subject and check them with the subject leader against a set of rigorous criteria. Consequently, areas of inconsistency are swiftly identified and addressed with staff. As well as formal observations of lessons the headteacher and deputy monitor informally to ensure that good practice is shared. The school promotes community cohesion extremely effectively by actively fostering a very strong sense of community, both within the school and outside it. It helps pupils gain an excellent understanding of people's different beliefs and customs, both in the United Kingdom and across the world.

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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?	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?	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Fairfield's Primary School and Nursery, Cheshunt, EN7 6JG

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out. Fairfield's Primary School and Nursery is an excellent school and provides an outstanding level of education.

The children who go to Little Fields have lots of exciting things to play with and already feel part of the school when they join Nursery. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make an excellent start and have plenty of opportunities to learn and play both inside and outside in the lovely play areas.

You told us that you loved coming to school because there are so many exciting things to do and you have lots of friends. We agree with you. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and thought that all the grown-ups look after you extremely well. We were delighted with all the fantastic art work on display. You make excellent progress as you move through the school and do better than many children of your age. This is because the teachers watch carefully to see how you are doing and give you help if you need it. The teaching assistants also give you plenty of help, especially if you find it hard to learn. We thought that you learned in exciting ways. We enjoyed watching some of you taste Mexican food and decide which you liked best. I think some of you were surprised at how spicy it was! You have lots of different sports to take part in. The capoeira session looked great fun. We thought that you know how to keep safe and healthy and take the responsibilities you are given very seriously. Your headteacher and the governors work very hard to make sure that your school is a lovely place to be. Your families know that you go to one of the best schools.

We have asked Mr Tuck to work with the teachers so that all the marking is of the highest quality and helps you understand exactly what you need to do to improve your work. You can all help by looking at what they write and continuing to try your best.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Fairfield's Primary School and do well in your next school.

Yours faithfully

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector