

# Fairfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134621
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	328935
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Heap

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	409
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Kevin Strachan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Judith Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Glenfield Road Fairfield Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 581305
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 571057

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large primary school that is housed in three separate buildings on the same site. The school provides Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) schooling in the Nursery (60 children) and Reception (41 children) classes. Social disadvantage in the local area is below the national norm and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are White British and a small number come from a limited range of minority ethnic groups, including children from the Traveller heritage. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has recently faced considerable challenges caused by the prolonged absence of senior staff and the effects on the budget of falling rolls. As a result, some classes have more than one age group in them. The school has achieved the following awards: Healthy School Gold and Activemark Silver.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it is good and provides good value for money. Pupils and parents are mostly satisfied with the education provided by the school and a typical view is 'My child is in her last year and throughout her time at Fairfield she has been very happy and content.' A small minority of parents have concerns about the school's ability to communicate and consult on specific matters but inspection evidence points to satisfactory practices in these areas.

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning and the school, behave well and show initiative. The good curriculum provides lots of opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and these are often used when working on personal topics, such as looking at rivers. Moreover, pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the benefits of leading healthy and safe lifestyles. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and the above average attendance is clear evidence of this. Pupils undertake freely the responsibilities on offer and make a good contribution to the school and wider communities. In this way they play a full part in the very good and caring ethos in the school, such as older pupils supporting younger ones.

Children enter the school with average skills and abilities and leave, at the end of Year 6, at an above average level. Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and given the pupils' starting points when they start school, this represents good achievement. Over time, standards are typically significantly above average and challenging targets are met. During the last two years, however, the challenging targets for pupils by the end of Year 6 have been met except for those gaining the above average Level 5. The school has acted swiftly to deal with the reason for this dip. As a result, the progress of more able pupils in Key Stage 2 is accelerating, but could still be quicker. Assessment, the process of setting targets and marking are used well in some classes but at times teachers are not telling students clearly what they have achieved and what their next steps in learning are. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from Traveller backgrounds are well supported and make good progress. They benefit from the good partnerships with outside agencies. Pupils develop good, basic skills and are well prepared for their future schooling and life beyond school.

Overall, teaching and learning are good. Lessons are brisk, informative and often challenging. Resources are used well to support learning. Teaching assistants provide good support and guidance for those pupils with extra learning needs. However, inconsistencies in tracking progress means that pupils are not always challenged to make maximum gains, particularly the most able.

Leadership and management are good and have promoted improvement over time. The headteacher has guided the school well through uncertain and disrupted times caused by reduced funding and disruptions to staffing. The school is improving the way that it monitors and evaluates its work and the capacity to improve is now good. However, the newly piloted school improvement planning has shortcomings in its measures of success and, as a result the plan is not as sharp as it could be. Governance is good. Financial management is prudent and secure.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision is good in all areas of learning and children progress well from their average skills and abilities on entry to the EYFS. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are above average. The good teaching in Nursery and Reception supports good progress. Moreover, extremely positive relationships and a calm approach settle children quickly. Consequently, children's personal development and well-being are good. Children enjoy their well-planned learning in classrooms and the outside learning area. Interesting activities stimulate exploration, creativity and language development. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities which promote independence. Adults have an accurate knowledge of each child's individual achievements and capabilities and they provide model guidance on how to do activities well. They carefully extend discussion through challenging questioning. Good leadership and management have established a consistent team approach within Nursery and Reception classes. This is having a positive impact on children's development. Staff offer high standards of care and support and ensure all children benefit equally. Managers are well aware that the outside area requires improvement and there are plans to do this. Parents support their children well by engaging in the home/school activities and good communication supports effective transition through Nursery and Reception.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of progress for more able pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the use, quality and consistency of target setting and marking so that pupils are clear about their achievements and what they need to do next.
- Sharpen the measures of success for the school improvement priorities.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils start Year 1 with above average standards. They make good progress by the end of Year 2 and standards have been consistently and significantly above average for several years. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, generally, standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average. However, in the last two years the school has not met its targets for the above average Level 5. As a result, the proportion of pupils achieving two levels progress has declined. The school's analysis of the reasons for this was accurate and is taking steps to accelerate the rate of progress for more able pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science. School data shows the current pupils to be achieving well and making good progress towards their targets and the picture looks to be much improved.

Pupils' work in books, together with the school's own assessment information shows that all groups of pupils with extra learning needs are now making equally good progress in relation to their starting points.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and they are supported and challenged by a wide range of sporting activities and healthy eating initiatives. Moral and social development are particularly strong and, as a result, pupils feel secure and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good and pupils say that levels of bullying are low. Effective systems

have helped to maintain good standards of behaviour and pupils are involved in exploring ways of supporting this through the school council. Pupils participate well, really enjoy school and they are very keen to learn. Pupils develop a good understanding of their neighbourhood and make good contributions to the school community in which they learn. Many pupils take on responsibilities, such as being prefects and playground friends, which make a significant contribution to the community ethos of the school. The school council makes a good contribution to school life and the community. Pupils are justifiably proud that the school has acted on their recommendations. Pupils are well prepared for the future by making good progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are particular strengths in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This is especially the case in Years 5 and 6 because teaching is mostly with groups of children who are set by having similar levels of prior attainment. In all lessons, teachers know pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and regularly reinforce learning for pupils with extra learning needs. Pupils mostly enjoy learning and are keen to participate because lessons have a brisk pace, and maintain their interest. Sometimes, the introduction to lessons is too prolonged and pupils' enthusiasm wanes but they learn particularly well when involved in practical work or when working in partnership with others. There is some good practice in the use of targets and in the marking of children's work. This is not consistent throughout the school, however, and not all written comments inform the pupil of what has been achieved and what needs to be done to make further progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well planned and meets requirements. The promotion of academic development is good and effectively meets the needs of pupils who clearly enjoy learning and make good progress. The use of basic skills in many areas of the school curriculum is good, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their writing across all subjects. There are good levels of enrichment, such as sporting and cultural activities outside of lessons. There is good provision for pupils to understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and this has led to the gaining of awards. For example, pupils have access to support from the school nurse and there is a programme of regular workshops on health issues. Pupils' awareness of the wider community is successfully developed, for example, through a carnival in conjunction with the community and local secondary school, and tree planting schemes in the surrounding neighbourhood. The curriculum is effectively modified to meet the needs of pupils with extra learning needs.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's arrangements for the care of its pupils are good. Safeguarding arrangements, including those for child protection, meet requirements. Monitoring and supervision of behaviour and attendance are effective. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The arrangements for the care and learning of these pupils are extensive and thoughtful. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils value the information that is given to them about

their progress, particularly in those classes where practice is strongest. Assessment is generally effective in identifying and guiding pupils who need support with learning. There are some good examples of marking pupils' work which tells them clearly how to improve, but it is not consistent across all year groups and subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and governors are committed to providing the best education for all pupils. They have managed well the difficulties caused by significant staffing changes and a reducing roll. The new leadership team have clearly identified roles in raising achievement and standards. Leaders set challenging and realistic targets for all pupils. In the last two years, disruptions to staffing reduced the success in reaching the targets for more able pupils. Recently introduced initiatives are beginning to tackle this issue effectively. The school has good evidence of better progress through monitoring pupils' portfolios. However, the newly introduced self-evaluation process requires more measurable criteria to evaluate the success of school improvement priorities. Safeguarding procedures are in place and pupils say they feel safe. The school has a strong commitment to promoting community cohesion and is in the process of developing strategies for promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of life beyond the UK. Pupils are highly visible in the community, particularly through school performances and by visiting the local church and nearby schools. The introduction of French has also led to plans for involvement in the Comenius project in order to improve pupils understanding of other cultures. Parents are successfully encouraged to support the school from Nursery to Year 6; this is impacting well on pupils' progress in literacy. Governors are very supportive and keen to ensure that resources are used effectively to raise standards and support school priorities.

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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?	2
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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	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

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

23 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7PW

The inspectors thoroughly enjoyed being in your good school this week. It was a privilege and a pleasure for us to work with you and the staff of the school. We were very impressed by the courtesy and help you provided. It is difficult to identify all the main points in a short letter, but here are some of the most important.

What we really liked about your school:

- the good progress made by all the pupils
- the way that you enjoy school, show good attitudes and contribute well to its running
- your good behaviour and the way that you very willingly take responsibility and help others
- your good understanding about keeping fit, healthy and safe
- the overall good quality of the teaching
- the excellent support that your parents give to the school.

We have asked your teachers to:

- work more closely with those of you in Key Stage 2 who find work easy so that you do even better
- improve the quality of target setting and marking to give you clearer guidance about how well you are doing and what you need to do next; I'm sure you will want to help by continuing to do your best work and following the guidance given by the staff.
- look at the school's improvement plan so that the plan is easier to use and helps to improve the school in the future.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector