

Forefield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104871
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	331521
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft, HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Gilkes
Headteacher	Mr R F Naylor
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Forefield Lane Crosby Liverpool Merseyside L23 9TJ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held discussions with governors, managers, staff, parents, an officer of the local authority and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation for management, planning, safeguarding of pupils, teaching and the curriculum.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well the various aspects of school life are managed to promote high pupil and staff performance; and
- standards and the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics.

Information about the school

This junior school serves a suburban area of favourable economic circumstances. The pupils live mainly in owner occupied housing and some live in council properties. The vast majority enter from Forefield Infant School in Year 3. Attainment on entry is well above average. The school has attained an Activemark for exceptional sport, the International Eco-Schools Award and National Healthy Schools Status, together with several local awards relating to education for sustainability.

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	371	Above average
Free school meals	10.9%	Below average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	17.4%	Slightly below average
Proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups	2.5%	Well below average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	1.3%	Well below average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	0.3%	Well below average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstandingly effective school. Standards are very high in English, mathematics and science. Work seen in the other subjects of the school's excellent curriculum was at a similarly high standard. The behaviour, courtesy and motivation of the pupils are most impressive. The dedicated teaching and support staff provide exceptionally good care, guidance and teaching. All pupils make outstanding progress, though there is room to develop further their understanding of people from cultures different to their own. Pupils' progress is firmly supported by the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and other managers. School leaders have a first class track record in managing improvement and a crystal clear vision of how the school is to develop further. Resources are managed meticulously and every penny is made to count. The governors play a strong and supportive role in the school and have a clear insight into its performance. However, the recent disagreement in the governing body about an aspect of school uniform is deflecting discussion from educational matters.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In consultation with parents, and mindful of advice from the local authority, bring to a satisfactory conclusion the current disagreement about school uniform.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to mix with and learn about people from different cultural backgrounds.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are significantly above the national average – a position that has been maintained for many years. There are no notable differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Boys and girls do equally well and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress

given their capabilities. The high quality of pupils' achievement spans the whole curriculum and excellent work was seen in a wide range of subjects.

Pupils are exceptionally enthusiastic learners and develop the confidence to speak their minds. All take great pride in the presentation of their work and this is aided by their careful concentration. They rise to challenges and make informed choices about the strategies to use for different tasks. Pupils' obvious enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance, punctuality, behaviour and high levels of respect for adults and each other. This makes for a very productive learning environment. Pupils know how to keep safe, fit and healthy, referring to balancing food groups in their diet, and getting plenty of sleep and exercise. Many were seen making healthy choices at lunchtime and the take up of extra-curricular sporting activities is very high.

Pupils take on responsibilities and contribute well to their school and the wider community through, for example, the school council, eco committee and their work in collecting for various charities. Pupils demonstrate a good and sometimes profound awareness of moral and social issues and express strong opinions about how people should behave towards one another. Given this maturity, there is scope for pupils' already good contribution to the community to be extended by strengthening their awareness of people from different cultural backgrounds to their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

Teachers know their subjects and pupils extremely well. This supports high quality planning to ensure the needs of all pupils are met. Imaginative teaching captures

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

and holds pupils' attention, not just in English and mathematics, but throughout the curriculum. High expectations show in the pace and rigour of lessons, questioning and tasks. The warm relationships teachers have with pupils help them participate confidently and 'have a go' even if unsure. Assessment is integral to planning and lessons. Teachers continually check understanding and adapt lessons accordingly to reinforce learning or dispel misconceptions. They ensure pupils are clear about what they are learning and refer to pupils' targets frequently to promote progress. Marking is of a consistently very high quality, providing points for improvement, and often engaging pupils in dialogue about their work. Teaching assistants make a highly valuable contribution to learning.

The excellent curriculum forms a solid foundation for high academic standards and personal development. It is enriched by many interesting, varied and high quality extra-curricular experiences. Excellent links are forged between different subjects. The deployment of teachers with specialist subject expertise enhances the provision, for example in design and technology and French. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure provision is adapted well to pupils' needs including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

At the time of the inspection, the school met all safeguarding requirements. It provides an exceptional level of care and guidance for pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	1
Effective assessment and academic guidance	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is outstandingly well led and managed. Every aspect of school life is managed highly effectively to promote high pupil and staff performance. The inspirational headteacher focuses unremittingly on the quality of education and personal development, progress and standards. This focus is shared consistently by the other school managers and the teaching and support staff. The emphasis on teaching and how to improve it is well supported by careful evaluation of learning and the teachers' classroom practice. Where such evaluation shows a need for development effective training helps teachers to improve. The staff have a crystal clear picture of how each pupil and class is making progress founded on first rate procedures to monitor pupils' performance. Such monitoring is well used to ensure that each child makes excellent progress. The school has developed in a sustained way in recent years, not least in the improvement of accommodation and resources for learning. Provision for information and communication technology, for instance, is now excellent and it supports teaching and learning very well. A large budget surplus has been thriftily accumulated to support ambitious plans to improve provision for all-weather sports and outdoor activities. The school's outstanding record in

managing improvement is matched by the headteacher's capacity to encourage and get the best out of the staff. The governing body has a very clear insight into the performance of the school and it provides a good balance of support and challenge. After some discussion in the governing body, the school is preparing to consult with stakeholders on the issue of pupils' uniform.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Replies to the inspection questionnaire were received from the parents/carers of a quarter of the pupils. The vast majority of parents who replied are highly satisfied with the breadth and quality of provision made by the school. Such comments as 'My child has received an excellent education that will serve him well in secondary education', 'Forefield is an exceptional school' and 'My child has attended a wide range of thoroughly enjoyable extra-curricular activities which have enriched school life' capture the prevailing view. This is very well supported by the findings of the inspectors. However, a sixth of parent respondents criticise the school's policies that boys should wear short trousers and that drinking water bottles should not be used at classroom desks. Neither policy was considered to be a problem by the children who were spoken to by the inspectors.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



7th November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forefield Junior School, Sefton, L23 9TJ

I promised to let you know what we thought of your school when we inspected it recently.

- Forefield Junior School is outstanding.
- All of you learn a great deal in your four years at the school and you are very well prepared to go on to secondary schools.
- The standard of your work in subjects and activities is excellent.
- This is partly because of the first class care and teaching you are given and partly because you all want to work hard and do as well as you can.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you obviously enjoy coming to school very much.
- You have wonderful opportunities to join in with such a wide range of really interesting activities and many of you take part in these.
- The school is exceptionally well managed. The headteacher and staff go to great lengths to ensure you are well taught, behave considerately and grow up responsibly.
- Your parents are rightly very pleased with the education you receive at Forefield.
- The governors and headteacher are determined that the school will continue to get better.

To help the school to improve, I have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- give you more opportunities to learn about people from other cultures who make up our diverse community in the UK; and
- consult with parents to find out what they all think about the type of uniform you wear.

I wish you all the very best for your future learning at Forefield Junior School.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Peter Toft'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Peter Toft HMI
Lead inspector

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