

Fairfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107802
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336953
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Neild
Headteacher	Mr Richard Ware
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
School address	White Lee Road Batley West Yorkshire WF17 8AS
Telephone number	01924 326103
Fax number	01924 325702
Email address	richardware@fairfield.kirklees.sch.uk

Age group	3–19
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Inspection number	336953

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 11 different teachers. Further time was spent looking at pupils' records of achievement, workbooks, and information about pupils' progress. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, and other professionals and looked at the school's review of its work, the current development plan, minutes of meetings of the governing body and documentation to ensure that pupils are safe. The responses to 56 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

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

- improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in Years 3 to 11
- how successful the school is in maintaining a quality provision for pupils with degenerative and life-limiting conditions
- whether or not pupils achieve equally well in all subjects
- pupils' understanding of how well they are doing.

Information about the school

The school caters for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and for those with severe needs. All pupils have a statement for their special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with profound difficulties is growing, as is the complexity of their physical and medical needs. About a half of the pupils are of White British background. The other half are of Pakistani origin, with one third speaking English as an additional language. A higher than usual number is in the care of the local authority. When taking account of pupils who are fed through gastro tubes the proportion entitled to free school meals is above average.

The school is oversubscribed and, unusually, a significant number of families have two or more children at the school. The school provides a support service for other special and mainstream schools in communication and interaction. A 52 week service is provided to assist families who need support out of school hours. The school has received a number of awards for sport, the creative arts, careers and the Eco green flag.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that has improved considerably since the last inspection and continues to do so. It provides good value for money, not just for the pupils on roll, but for those in other establishments through the professional advice for staff working with those with communication and complex needs. Since the last inspection, the school has built upon its strengths with the result that the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is exceptional, enabling children to make remarkable progress. However, by the time students leave the sixth form, their attainment is low because of their special educational needs and difficulties. Nevertheless, their achievement is good. While pupils now have far more severe and complex needs than at the time of the last inspection, the rate of progress of most has improved because of much improved teaching. Equally, the curriculum has improved and has numerous strengths which contribute to learning. For example, effective links with mainstream schools contribute considerably to pupils' achievements and well-being. While leaders have an overview of each pupil's programme, no analysis has been undertaken to check for omissions or duplication in individual pupils' programmes.

Through daily routines and an extensive programme, pupils make excellent gains in their spiritual, moral social and cultural development. They receive exceptional care, guidance and support. Outstanding links with parents and carers, and partnerships with numerous health professionals and other agencies contribute greatly to pupils' learning and well-being. Pupils and staff thrive under the influential leadership of the headteacher, who together with the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers, provide an impressive team. They have successfully created a school that embraces all learners and have worked with determination and imagination to improve provision. Resolute not to stand still, plans to apply for specialist school status are well advanced. Leaders know the school in fine detail. Their monitoring of classroom practice is improving pupils' progress. A wealth of information has been collected on pupils' achievements in the core subjects of literacy, numeracy, personal development, and information and communication technology (ICT). However, the information is not drawn together to give an overall profile of individuals or particular groups. Equally, the checking of pupils' performance in the foundation subjects of humanities and the creative arts is less rigorous. Leaders know where they are going and how to get there, thus giving them good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve systems to record pupils' achievements, by:

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- refining, summarising and making better use of the information held on the progress of individual pupils and groups
- checking the progress pupils make in the foundation subjects more frequently.
- Keep an on-going check on individual pupils experiences to ensure they receive a balanced curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Though pupils' successes are mostly in very small steps, taking account of individual starting points, their progress is good. It is outstanding in the way in which they use different methods to communicate and in their mobility. Their progress in literacy and numeracy is good. While pupils appear to make good gains in other subjects over the past year, it is not always easy to pinpoint gaps in learning as their performance is only assessed once a year. Pupils show remarkable concentration, stamina and determination. They persevere, endeavouring to overcome any difficulties their condition may present. Their understanding of how well they are doing can be seen, for example, as they hugged themselves with glee on recognising a symbol or word. Pupils' achievements in Years 10 and 11 are now accredited through nationally recognised awards. Adults work hard to maintain the skill level and well-being of pupils with degenerative and life-limiting conditions. Pupils have high aspirations and a sense of worth through, for example, meeting with a Para- Olympian.

Pupils delight in their time in school, overcoming barriers such as chronic health conditions, mobility difficulties and communication needs in order to make the best of every opportunity. Their behaviour is excellent. They care about each other and try to give of their best at all times. As a result of very good behaviour plans, those with complex behavioural needs are more aware of consequences and respond exceptionally well to the expectations and role models provided by adults. Pupils are keen to share their understanding of keeping safe and healthy with others, warning the inspector to be careful near the pond commenting 'water – no'. Pupils contribute in numerous ways to the school and local community, such as in the creation and maintenance of a wildlife garden in a local park. Attendance is broadly average with almost all absences due to illness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The improvement in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 11 is evidenced in pupils' accelerated progress. Planning is now more detailed and linked to pupils' individual targets. Occasionally, however, planning makes reference to the activities rather than the expected learning for each pupil. Teachers and support staff work together very effectively speeding up the learning of individuals and groups. All are skilled in managing the wide range of complex needs. Every pupil is included in each lesson. Teaching is imaginative and the use of real objects makes learning meaningful. For example, the faces of pupils in Year 7 shone as their awareness of habitats increased as they plunged their hands into an 'ocean' to discover more about an underwater environment. In most lessons, teachers provide a range of activities to maintain pupils' interest, but occasionally the pace slows and with it pupils' attention. All adults are skilled at helping pupils to understand how well they have done so that even those with the most severe needs have a sense of achievement.

An impressive feature of the curriculum is its relevance to pupils and the various combinations of groups of pupils for different lessons. This ensures each pupil receives a personalised programme matched to their need. For many this includes weekly visits to mainstream schools for sport or the arts. Other pupils have additional sessions in speech and language or water therapy. While this benefits pupils, some, for example, miss a topic every week, while others have an imbalance in the time available for art. This affects their progress. The provision for using ICT to augment pupils' communication is outstanding. This is reflected in pupils' ability to interact with others and to make their needs known.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Adults provide excellent care, support and guidance for pupils, all of whom are vulnerable. The very good support for pupils with English as an additional language gives them the opportunity to gain an awareness of their culture. Well-trained staff provide first rate support for the wide range of medical conditions allowing all to take a full part in school life. In classrooms education and health professionals work together to ensure that each pupil receives the best possible care programme. Parents and carers report that the 52 week family liaison service and 'drop in' opportunities are life savers, not just in times of crisis, but when they feel they need to chat. Adults have responded especially well in supporting pupils with degenerative, life-limiting and terminal conditions. All endeavour to make the provision enjoyable, working closely with families and health professionals, during the inevitable periods of absence to help to maintain a better quality of life. Staff, pupils and their families have all supported each other very well in coming to terms with the untimely, but unrelated, deaths of five pupils in the last three months.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are clear and determined in their pursuit of excellence and have the skills and enthusiasm to achieve it. Through good professional training they have raised the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning. Specialist resources have been purchased to ensure that each pupil has equality of opportunity regardless of need. Imaginative use is made of the new building. The care and thought that leaders have put into the planning is evident, with each department being underpinned by an age appropriate philosophy and layout. As a consequence, learning opportunities and adults' expectations of the different ages, including the transition through the distinct age groups is smooth and reflects mainstream school practice. Robust systems ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Leaders agree, however, that the systems to track pupils' progress are not as effective as they could be.

Governance is good. Governors provide practical support as well as holding the school to account. At the time of the inspection, excellent policies and procedures were in place to ensure that all adults have an in-depth understanding of safeguarding pupils, as well as a comprehensive awareness of how the many medical conditions can make pupils even more vulnerable. Many of the actions undertaken by the school have been praised and adopted by the local authority. The school provides outstanding opportunities for pupils

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

to be aware of community cohesion. Pupils and staff enjoy cultural and creative experiences that reflect and celebrate its diverse population. Leaders have identified where sensitive and controversial issues might arise and provided the necessary support.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

As a consequence of the visionary leadership, provision for young children has built on the good practice in place at the time of the last inspection, giving them exceptional experiences. Excellent use is made of the first-rate accommodation to extend children's learning in all areas. As a result, children make excellent progress and achieve far more than would be expected, especially in communication and in their personal and social development. Their progress is equally impressive in their physical development. Carefully planned groups and activities enable children of all abilities to work to their maximum potential. Subsequently, the most mobile children have huge fun skipping and dancing, while those with limited mobility are helped to extend or maintain their range of movements as appropriate. Children shrug off their difficulties and disabilities as they gurgle with delight when, for example, experiencing the feel of cool grass, the smell of earth, and the touch of blossom on their faces in their 'living and growing' topic. Children receive excellent support and guidance, and all the welfare requirements are met. Adults meticulously record children's achievements and high-quality 'learning journeys' provide a delightful record of memorable moments for parents and carers.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Sixth form

Students make good progress overall in the sixth form because of good provision. Their understanding of business enterprise, and the work covered in careers education, is outstanding. It has received national recognition and prepares students exceptionally well for the next stage of their lives. Students take responsibility for their learning, setting personal goals for their education, health and well-being. They are justifiably proud of their Fair Trade businesses of paper crafts and horticulture and have made considerable profits, resulting in generous donations to charity. Furthermore, they make a crucial contribution to the life of the school by looking after the environment and taking responsibility for the massive recycling project. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. While creative thinking has led to a number of very successful initiatives, long-term planning is an area for development, particularly in the range of national awards and in providing a curriculum to fully meet the needs of the increasing number of students with profound and complex needs. Nevertheless, practical work and 'skills for living' activities enable all to leave with nationally recognised awards and all move on to further education.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Over half of the parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority were very positive. In addition, parents and carers attending the weekly group sessions say they especially appreciate the excellent communications and the opportunities to help their child at home, through the courses in signing, behaviour management and help with physiotherapy and treatments. Remarks such as, 'This

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

school is like a triangle with staff, agencies and parents all working together' are representative of the opinions of many. The inspectors agree with parents and carers' positive views of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairfield School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 109 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	77	13	23	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	86	7	13	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	71	16	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	68	17	30	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	73	15	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	68	16	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	75	13	23	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	54	24	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	75	14	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	68	16	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	68	17	30	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	75	13	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	80	11	20	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield School, Batley, WF17 8AS

I'm sure you will remember that a little while ago, a colleague and I spent a short time visiting your school. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking with you, eating lunch together and visiting your lessons. I especially enjoyed being out in the meadow with you. Thank you for taking time to give us your views of school. It was clear from our chats and the questionnaire replies we received from your parents and carers that you enjoy school and that you are safe and very well cared for.

We found out that your school is providing you with a good education. As well as working hard, you have huge fun in lessons, your Eco work benefits the community as well as your school. You are very well behaved and work very hard. This means that though your progress is in small steps, it is good given your starting points. All this happens because you have forward thinking leaders and good teachers. You are especially well cared for, particularly those of you who have medical problems.

There are a couple of areas that would make it even better. We have asked your teachers to:

- keep a careful note of all the activities you do, so you get a chance to have a go at everything
- keep a check on how well you are doing in every subject.

We know you will do all you can to help your teachers and wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Katharine Halifax

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.