

The Fairfield Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134707
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	341508
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Barnett
Headteacher	Mr J Schiffmann
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at its planning, assessment records, monitoring files and policies and 16 parental questionnaires.

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

- how much recent changes introduced by the new headteacher have improved pupils' performance
- the quality of teaching and if it is raising attainment
- the way the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children for the future.

Information about the school

The Fairfield Community Primary School is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. Nearly half of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and this is well above average. The largest group of these pupils has social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; another significant group has moderate learning difficulties. Almost all pupils are White British and use English as their first language. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in Nursery and Reception classes. The current headteacher took up his post in April 2009.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The appointment of the headteacher in April 2009 offered a chance for the school to renew its ambitions and priorities. His dynamic and optimistic outlook has started to infuse and enthuse the school. His influence is evident in a renewed focus on improving areas of weakness in progress, teaching and behaviour. This drive to address concerns has started to have a quantifiable impact on pupils' progress, which is now good. There is more good teaching, better behaviour and a trend of improvement in the school. More accurate self-evaluation has identified most of the areas that need attention. Plans for the future provide a good template for continuing development and, with the currently much stronger track record of improvement, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for going further forward.

Children make a satisfactory start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but their assessment is not always well used and they do not consistently have enough opportunities to follow the most stimulating courses of learning. Pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is well below that expected for their age. Their attainment rises to be below average, when they leave Year 6. With recent improvements in the school, their progress has become good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with moderate learning and behavioural difficulties, also progress well because they are well supported. Pupils' achievement, overall, is satisfactory.

Pupils do not find it easy to behave well. Firm and consistent guidance from their teachers is leading to improvements and, while some can still be a little recalcitrant, behaviour has much improved and is satisfactory. This means lessons have few of the previous impediments, and teachers have been freed to promote improved learning. Much teaching is lively and increasingly challenging. The justified focus on improving writing is succeeding in raising the quality of pupils' work, by opening up learning to them. There are examples of helpful and accurate assessment, but the way pupils' work is marked and the advice they receive about how to improve are inconsistent. The curriculum covers the required ground and offers some good enrichment opportunities, such as after-school clubs, but it is not fully adapted to pupils' needs and tastes.

Pupils know they are well cared for and are happy at school. The skilled support for those with barriers to learning is impressive and ensures the school is inclusive in its approach. The most vulnerable pupils are particularly well looked after in the nurture group. Despite considerable efforts from the school, attendance remains low. Most of the few parents who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire support the school strongly.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2010, ensure better progress and higher attainment through:
 - ensuring all teaching matches the best practice by improving marking and the involvement of pupils in target setting
 - developing a more exciting curriculum that stimulates pupils and helps them to understand the relevance of their learning to their everyday lives.
- By July 2010, use assessment information in the Early Years Foundation Stage to inform planning and ensure learning activities are better focused on the needs of each child.
- From January 2010, build the efforts to raise attendance by improving pupils' pride in full attendance.
- About 40 percent of schools whose effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school recognises that attainment has been too low for a number of years and is taking concerted action to boost pupils' progress. Two initiatives have had a positive effect. Firstly, a new and fully enforced behaviour policy has led to improved concentration and more positive attitudes in classrooms. Secondly, the school has monitored teaching and promoted good practice much more rigorously. In consequence, teaching has developed a stronger emphasis on promoting good learning. As a result of these initiatives, lessons are more enjoyable for pupils and more focused on accelerating their progress. Although attainment remains below average, there has been a sharp upturn in progress for boys and girls of all ages, and it is now good.

The many pupils with social, behavioural and emotional difficulties make slightly better progress than other pupils, because the support for those with special educational needs and/or difficulties is consistently strong. The school's focus on writing has made a discernable difference to the quality of pupils' written work.

The school's emphasis on improving behaviour is working. Most pupils and parents recognise that the school is much calmer and there are fewer disruptions to learning. Pupils are happy at school. Good relationships with teachers help them feel safe and to understand how to stay safe. They know the benefits of exercise and a healthy diet and realise what is needed to live a healthy life. They have a reasonable understanding of right and wrong and their satisfactory social development is evident in their positive relationships with one another.

Despite the school's good efforts, attendance remains low, even though the number of persistent absentees has fallen this year. Improving progress in key skills, like literacy and computing, ensure that pupils' preparation for the future is satisfactory. They have too few opportunities to contribute to school life and, although there are interesting plans to revive the school council, currently too few pupils have a chance to share their

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views. Older pupils regret the lack of opportunities to take responsibility for their younger peers. The school has recently established some opportunities for pupils to engage with the local community, such as participating in a local music event.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	4
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning have improved because lessons have become more active and interesting. Literacy and numeracy are well reinforced and are promoted across the curriculum in various contexts. Pupils enjoy lessons because they are purposeful and orderly experiences. Where the teacher adopts an enquiring approach - for example, when Year 1 found out about the North Pole for themselves, pupils become very excited and interested in their findings. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to use computers and other new technologies, such as cameras, to support and demonstrate their learning. They make good use of a range of resources, such as pictures, flashcards and writing frames to support independent learning. Planning is generally well structured to address the full range of needs, and the ends of lessons are used effectively to reinforce and develop learning. The best teachers have imaginative ways

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

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to engage even the most reluctant learners by addressing their personal needs. There is excellent teaching in the nurture group, where specific needs are respected, such as using consistent strategies to help pupils deal with overwhelming emotions. In the best lessons, the teaching assistants work seamlessly with class teachers to ensure consistent support for pupils. Teachers who adopt an enthusiastic and collaborative approach often use questions very well too, modelling an enquiring approach to learning.

Some teachers, but not all, mark pupils' books frequently to reinforce good learning and pick up promptly on misconceptions. In these classes, pupils are aware of their targets and how to address them. In other classes, because of less effective marking, pupils tend to be unsure about the next steps in their learning.

Current developments are making the curriculum more active and relevant to the needs of pupils. The cross-curricular approach to teaching literacy and numeracy is beginning to raise attainment. Pupils say they enjoy regular and appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) in all lessons. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn actively and explore topics that really interest them. Pupils' experiences are enlivened by theme days, for example 'stars and stripes' and by well-attended after-school clubs. Visits and visitors are used effectively to enrich the taught curriculum. They raise pupils' awareness of local facilities and events, such as attending the switching on of Christmas lights. Visitors frequently attend after-school clubs to coach pupils in dance and other activities.

Pupils are happy that staff are very supportive. All learners know they have a friendly face to turn to when they are in need. Clearly targeted support for vulnerable pupils promotes their personal development very well. The nurture group is outstanding. It gives pupils who lack social skills and confidence a safe haven where they are both listened to and valued. Early identification of pupils with moderate learning and other difficulties, followed by rigorous assessment and targeted help, ensures that these pupils overcome barriers to learning and so progress as well as, if not better than, their peers. Positive links with outside agencies provide good support for more vulnerable pupils. The school works hard to promote good attendance, but initiatives have not yet secured this objective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's positive approach has galvanised the school. Senior staff quickly

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identified those areas that needed immediate attention and put all their energies into securing better progress, teaching and behaviour. While their work has not yet had its full impact, there is good evidence of the school driving improvements in each of these areas. In particular, rigorous monitoring and promotion of teaching sets high expectations and is developing greater consistency in classroom practice and promoting faster progress.

Governors are supportive of the school and have a rigorous approach to its financial management, ensuring that it provides satisfactory value for money. They are involved in developing a strategic direction for the future and help assure the safety of the school. They recognise that aspects of their monitoring could be improved. Safeguarding is satisfactory and the school has robust procedures, such as risk assessment, to ensure pupils' well-being.

The large campus, of which the school is a part, encourages strong partnerships with neighbours, such as the library and special school. Staff expertise from the latter is valuable in supporting a constructive approach with some of the school's vulnerable pupils. Other agencies, such as the local authority, benefit the school by providing families with support in bringing up their children. There are improving partnerships with parents and some positive initiatives, such as year group blogs that are accessible on the internet, which provide them with up-to-date information. The inclusive nature of the school and improving progress ensure that equality of opportunity for all is good. The school is internally cohesive and there are improving links with the local community, largely through associations with nearby churches. The school has undertaken some evaluation of its community cohesion and has a clear view of its local context. Using the analysis of what it is doing, it is planning to develop further links, both close to home and further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Achievement is satisfactory because, although only half the pupils achieve their Early Learning Goals, they have very low starting points and more children have achieved higher levels over the last three years. While their knowledge and understanding of the world is close to national norms, their levels in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development are well below what is expected. Children learn good routines and have a sound range of experiences while in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but there are some missed opportunities to develop critical thinking and independence in the Reception class. Children enjoy coming to school and learn to keep themselves safe and healthy. They participate well, respect others and make good choices in how to behave. They have a sound beginning, therefore, to their school careers.

Children are well cared for and supported and an adequate range of activities is planned. Not every adult is clear about how to stimulate and evaluate the learning of those they are supporting. As a result, some opportunities are missed to extend or reinforce learning. Additionally, there is scope for extending the range of activities. For example, limited resources restrict children's opportunities when they are learning outdoors.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into the Early Years Foundation Stage and their contributions are valued. Staff work cohesively together to provide enjoyable experiences for children. Regular assessments of children's developing skills are gathered, but they are not drawn together or used in a focused way to improve provision and to meet, systematically, each child's learning needs.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Sixteen parents returned questionnaires, a low number for a school of this size. Most were positive, and showed very favourable responses about how well the school promotes pupils' health, and meets each child's individual needs. A minority of parents

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expressed reservations about teaching, progress and behaviour, but the inspection found a school that is satisfactory and improving in these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Fairfield Community Primary 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 16 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 190 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	50	5	31	1	6	2	13
The school keeps my child safe	11	69	2	13	3	19	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	69	2	13	3	19	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	56	3	19	4	25	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	50	4	25	3	19	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	50	5	31	3	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	6	38	10	63	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)	8	50	4	25	2	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	63	5	31	1	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	44	4	25	1	6	4	25
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	56	4	25	3	19	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	63	3	19	2	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	56	4	25	1	6	2	13

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupil's 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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield Community Primary School, Worcester, WR4 9HG

It was good to meet you when the inspectors visited the school recently. You told us that it is improving, and we agree. At the moment, the school gives you a satisfactory education, but things are certainly getting better. Your attainment when you leave is below the average of 11 year-olds across the country, but good teaching is helping you to make good progress now, and your achievement is satisfactory.

You told us you are happy with the school and you are certainly well cared for. Those who have trouble learning get lots of good support. Behaviour used to be a worry, but teachers now deal with it much better and it has improved. You can help it be better still by trying really hard to be good in lessons and listening to your teachers.

Many of the improvements have happened because the new headteacher has got everyone fired up to do better. The staff support his ambition for the school very well. For the school to continue to improve, I have asked staff to concentrate on:

- making marking better, so that it gives you a clearer idea of how to improve your work
- improving the mixture of topics and subjects you follow (the curriculum) so that they are more interesting
- improving the activities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to help them make faster progress
- making sure pupils are only absent when they have to be. You can help in this by attending school as often as possible.

Once again, many thanks for all your help, it was good meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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