

Fairfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122552
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340169
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Miller

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Collins
Headteacher	David Howatson
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 28 lessons, and 15 teachers were seen. Inspectors held meetings with the governing body, staff and the school council. They looked at pupils' work and attended assemblies. They talked informally with pupils, and met with parents and carers at the start of the school day. They spoke with local authority representatives. School documents were scrutinised including policies, development planning and self-evaluation, monitoring files, curriculum and safeguarding documents. Minutes of governing body meetings were examined as well as the headteacher's reports to the governing body, local authority reports on the school and information provided for parents and carers. Inspectors received and analysed questionnaires from 109 parents and carers, 28 members of staff and 85 pupils.

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

- the work the school is undertaking to raise pupils' attainment in English throughout the school
- the ways in which the school plans lessons and learning for all individuals and groups of pupils in order to secure their progress
- the impact of the school's curriculum in raising pupils' achievement and in making learning increasingly relevant
- the ways through which the school's leaders, at all levels, monitor and evaluate the school's work in order to secure further improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average school. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving each year is very high; only about one-third of all pupils continue their education right through the school. Year groups triple in Year 3 when pupils transfer from another local infant school at the start of Key Stage 2; other pupils often join at the start of Year 5 prior to transfer to a local secondary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; such pupils have a wide variety of individual needs. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school provides one-to-one study support for its pupils as part of its extended services. The school has achieved Gold Healthy School status and gained an International Schools Award.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Attainment is rising, particularly in Key Stage 1 where the good progress children make in Reception is now being maintained through Years 1 and 2. This has yet to feed through into Key Stage 2 where progress is satisfactory. Current Year 6 pupils started Year 3 with above average attainment, whereas for other year groups this was average. Their attainment in Year 6 continues to be above average in science, mathematics and reading but is broadly average in writing, which is a weaker area throughout the school. The school's new management structure is having a positive impact in securing improved attainment and progress. Leadership at all levels is strengthening and teamwork approaches have been established. Self-evaluation is increasingly robust. This is gradually enabling the school to drive up standards, particularly in writing, and improve pupils' progress.

Key strengths of the school are the personal development of the pupils and the ways this is underpinned through good pastoral care, guidance and support. Partnerships and the school's approach in working with others to support pupils are good. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their cooperation when they work together are important qualities to stand them in good stead in their future lives. Working relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils say they have confidence in the staff and like their teachers because they make learning fun. They appreciate particularly the school garden and the healthy, seasonal food they grow there. They take responsibility readily, and show a proper concern for each other's welfare.

The school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory. It has yet to establish a longer-term track record by sustaining improvement to pupils' progress. A three year decline in performance has been reversed during the last academic year, but relatively new initiatives have yet to have a full impact. New tracking systems for assessing pupils' progress are enabling effective monitoring and ensuring all teachers are accountable for pupils' progress. Staff are rising well to this challenge. Good new approaches have been introduced for writing and mathematics, but not yet for reading or science. In recent times, the school has received significant support from the local authority and established fruitful partnerships with other schools which are enabling it to improve. Nevertheless, the 2006 issue of improving writing across the school is only just starting to be resolved.

The curriculum is good because the school has worked hard over the past couple of years in developing practical and exciting elements through which cross-curricular links are making learning relevant, enjoyable and interesting for pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall because its influence on raising standards and improving progress has yet to be tested over time. Assessment is improving and there are examples of good

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practice. However, the use of assessment to aid lesson planning is inconsistent, as is the use of assessment to support learning. Teachers and teaching assistants do not make consistently effective use of questioning to check pupils' understanding during lessons. The school recognises that the monitoring of lessons by senior and middle leaders, to focus on identifying what enables pupils to learn best, is insufficiently rigorous. This priority is identified in its improvement plan.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the next academic year, raise pupils' attainment in English at the end of Year 6 by:
 - increased, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning to identify further ways to improve the development of pupils' writing skills
 - making full and effective use of the new systems for assessing pupils' progress to improve achievement in writing across all year groups.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching at the school by:
 - ensuring a more consistent approach to the use of assessment to plan lessons which provide good levels of support and challenge for all groups of pupils
 - developing the partnership between teachers and teaching assistants in the assessment of pupils' learning and progress throughout lessons
 - using questioning regularly and effectively throughout each lesson to check on pupils' understanding and to identify and resolve any gaps or misconceptions about their learning.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Current Year 2 pupils have made good progress from their broadly average standards at the start of Year 1. Attainment is above average, including for writing. Initiatives on writing, right from the Reception year, are paying dividends in Key Stage 1. Girls are achieving consistently well, but boys are making better progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. Year 2 pupils achieved particularly well in a mathematics lesson when working on halving multiples of 10 and relating this to a real life situation where a garden centre owner needed to cut his prices. The personal development of Year 1 and 2 pupils was supported well in a personal, social and health education lesson where they enjoyed exploring things which make us smile. Above average speaking and listening skills were exhibited in a discussion about Van Gogh, and pupils were clearly respecting each other's views and opinions.

In Key Stage 2, school data from much improved, close tracking of pupils' progress shows the large majority of pupils have made steady progress this academic year. The mainly average standards seen during the inspection are being consolidated. In the

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past, progress has tended to slow in Years 3 to 5 and had to be accelerated in Year 6. Attainment is now meeting expectations by the end of Years 3 to 5, and pupils across all year groups are on track overall to meet their individual targets. Where potential underachievement has been identified early, such as in writing in Year 3 and mathematics in Year 4, effective remedial programmes have been quickly put in place. Investigative work is strong in science, resulting in consistently above average standards across the school. Combined with an emphasis on developing pupils' thinking skills, investigations are now supporting higher attainment in mathematics. In Year 6 lessons, pupils' solving of a 'murder mystery' by plotting line graphs of fictitious suspects' heartbeats confirmed above their average attainment. This work also involved good consideration of the motives and personal qualities of the suspects.

Until recently the school had not monitored effectively enough its different groups of pupils. It now evaluates the performance of pupils by gender and ethnicity, those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those with a ranges of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Such groups have all made satisfactory progress during this academic year.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

A very positive element of both teaching and the curriculum is the way the school places pupils' learning and skills development in context. Topics therefore engage and motivate pupils and cross-curricular links are appreciated and understood. The school has considered and planned well what should be taught; it continues to work on improving the teaching strategies which will use the good curriculum to maximise pupils' learning. Good aspects of the teaching include good subject expertise and regular marking which shows pupils their next steps in learning. The main area for improvement lies in teachers' planning for individuals and groups of pupils to ensure suitable challenge. Lesson planning states what pupils must, should or could do, but is not always precise enough about the level of challenge required. Planning does not identify consistently how pupils' learning should be assessed by both teachers and teaching assistants.

Staff clearly care well for the pupils, which impacts positively on pupils' personal and social development. Good transition arrangements help pupils settle quickly into school and make friends. There are good procedures to support and encourage the above average attendance rates. Sport has a high profile at the school, the uptake is high and, as a result, pupils understand well the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. There are good procedures for the support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities which have led to their improved progress this year. The school is planning further staff training for the specific support of pupils with more complex learning difficulties.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's own grading of leadership and management as satisfactory echoes the honest and open approach to school self-evaluation and improvement planning and reflects the school's recent track record. Good teamwork is strengthening the quality of leadership across the school. A joint approach to the monitoring of lessons by both senior and middle leaders has improved the effectiveness of teaching, but the proportion of good and better teaching is not yet high enough. The pairing of teachers to share good practice is being viewed as a positive experience by staff. There is a constructive, whole-school focus on how teaching underpins and improves pupils' progress. The closer monitoring of learning, pupils' learning styles, and the ways both teachers and teaching assistants share responsibility for pupils' learning, are areas for further

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improvement. Teachers' expectations and the levels of challenge they provide for pupils are rising.

The governing body is developing closer links with the school through 'governor days' in order to gain increased insight into the school and its needs. However, governors recognise they do not have consistently effective systems for recording their findings and promoting dialogue with staff. Individual governors use their personal and professional skills well in support of the school. The child protection governor and the headteacher ensure that the safeguarding of children is good. Procedures are rigorously applied across all areas of the school's work and routinely reviewed. Some technical cross-referencing in policies is too complex, but the practical application of child protection is exemplary. The school provides effective support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and gaps in performance between different groups are closing. However, it is too early to judge whether this improvement will be sustained, so the effectiveness of the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is therefore satisfactory overall. Community cohesion is similarly satisfactory. The school operates as a harmonious community and has established good links with communities locally and internationally. It has not, however, undertaken a full evaluation of the impact of its actions to promote community cohesion effectively beyond the school.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below the expectations for their age, and well below in their emerging writing skills. Good management and teaching ensure the

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early assessment of children, with good tracking of their development throughout the year. Areas of particular weakness, such as writing, are targeted well. Work on phonics, letters and sounds has a high profile in everyday activities. The children's learning journals provide a good record of their progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader builds up a thorough picture of children's achievements across all aspects of their learning and development. By the end of the Reception year children have made good progress. Their attainment is broadly average, but remains below average for writing. Links with the main partner infant school and parents are good; there is very good attention to the welfare and safeguarding of children. Good resources, used effectively, and developments to the outside area, shared with Key Stage 1 pupils, enhance learning well. However, the setting does lack large climbing equipment to support physical development. Children studying mini-beasts were fascinated by the woodlice and spiders they found in the garden area. Their gentle and careful handling of these creatures was impressive. When one boy brought a snail into a personal and social education session this immediately lit up the whole room. Good teaching built on this experience and the children were completely fascinated by the way the snail stretched its head out of its shell and sensed its way with its feelers. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world was enhanced significantly by this opportunity.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are entirely supportive of the school. A few wrote indicating that their concerns and suggestions are not taken into account. The inspection found that there are good channels of communication and the large majority of parents and pupils feel they are listened to and their views valued. Concerns were raised by some parents about the safety of pupils using vehicular rather than the designated pedestrian entrances. The school does provide clear guidance on this matter; this has been repeated in newsletters, but not all parents act on the school's advice. A few parents expressed concern about behaviour at the school. Inspectors found that behaviour is good because pupils understand and obey their 'Golden Rules' and behaviour management is consistent. With 30 children, the size of the Reception class has doubled this year. Some parents expressed concern that as teaching assistants are only part-time in Reception this affects children's continuity of learning. The inspection did not find this to be the case; however, the school is in the process of

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restructuring staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage to improve further learning support.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairfield 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 409 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	61	37	34	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	61	32	29	9	8	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	44	55	50	4	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	43	50	46	8	7	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	56	51	47	43	1	1	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	42	52	48	8	7	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	50	47	43	3	3	1	1
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)	54	50	39	36	6	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	47	43	39	10	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	46	42	39	10	9	6	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	36	48	44	18	17	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	51	47	40	37	8	7	8	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	55	38	35	8	7	2	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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. ■ 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.



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairfield Primary School, Nottingham, NG9 7HB

We would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and the way you shared your thoughts and feelings about school life. Yours is a satisfactory school.

These are some of the things we found are best about your school.

You receive a good start to your school life in the Reception class.

Your behaviour around school and attitudes to learning are good.

You cooperate well together and are prepared to take responsibility.

Adults take good care of you, just as you take good care of each other.

Your understanding of the importance of living healthily is good.

Your teachers provide you with interesting work, and you have fun in learning.

We have asked your headteacher and the other teachers to do two main things to help you achieve even more during your time at school. First, to help you gain higher standards in English, especially in your writing work. You can help here by continuing to work hard at your writing in all subjects. Secondly, to help you learn even better through the ways teachers plan lessons and assess your work and progress.

Finally, one other thing impressed us, you do live up to your school's motto, 'Take pride, take time, take laughter - make the future!' Please continue to do so as it will really help you all to achieve your best. We wish you all well for your future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Miller

Lead inspector

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