

Fairfields Primary School and Nursery

Rosedale Way, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, EN7 6JG

Inspection dates 27–28 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. The school is a calm and purposeful place where good manners are the norm.
- Pupils make good overall progress throughout the school in English and mathematics
- Standards have improved this year and pupils' attainment is often above average for their age.
- Teachers provide lively and exciting tasks that enable pupils to build on their learning step by step.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is at the centre of the school's work.
- The headteacher, senior team and governing body take a strong lead in driving improvement and raising attainment. Rigorous checks on teaching, with good training and support where it is needed, maintain the quality of classroom practice.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some staff do not always make enough use of their knowledge about what pupils already know to move them on quickly enough with new learning.
- A few staff do not organise lessons well enough and take too long to explain to pupils what they need to do, which slows their learning.
- The quality of written marking is inconsistent and too few opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to the advice given
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, boys are not developing their mathematical calculation skills as well as they should through investigative play.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 22 lessons. This included several joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors listened to several pupils read and looked at samples of recent work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Early Years Foundation Stage staff, the special educational needs coordinator and the deputy headteacher. Discussions also took place with groups of mixed-ability pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. A representative of the local authority spoke to the lead inspector by telephone.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 36 parents and carers who responded to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring information, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language are below average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (extra funding from the government for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were on an educational visit to the Isle of Wight.
- The school shares its site with 'Little Fields', a childcare facility for 0 to 3 year olds. This is inspected separately.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after school club for pupils, parents and carers every weekday.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were both internally appointed in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that the quality of teaching is consistently effective and increase the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - making sure that, when teachers mark pupils' work, they give clear points on how to improve it and allow pupils time in lessons to read, understand and follow the advice given
 - in all classes, using the assessment of pupils' skills and previous learning to plan work that is set at the right level for pupils' different abilities
 - giving boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunity to develop their mathematical calculation skills through investigative play.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in both Nursery and Reception classes with skills below and sometimes well below those expected for their age. They make good and sometimes excellent progress, thanks especially to the strong focus on teaching the skills of early reading and writing. This was well illustrated when children were comfortably using their knowledge of letters and sounds to write about the pirate Captain Hook.
- At the time of the previous inspection pupils' standards were above national averages. This was not maintained and standards fell in Key Stage 2 to national averages. In 2012, however, the percentage of pupils gaining nationally expected levels rose to place the school in the top 40% in the country.
- Leaders have rigorously addressed this underperformance and, this year, the school has improved the organisation and use of assessment information to track the progress made by individuals and groups. This has helped identify which pupils need support and improved the overall rate of progress made. Recent assessments, together with results already in, indicate that standards are now above average at the end of Year 6, and progress in Years 1 to 6 is good for all pupils of different abilities and from different backgrounds.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive specific additional help in lessons, in small groups and in individual activities. Staff work successfully to help these pupils to grow in confidence and make good progress towards their individual targets.
- The school is making very effective use of its pupil premium funding. Additional tuition, more-focused teaching assistant time, and funding for more additional educational resources, for example, are helping these pupils to make good progress. In 2012, these pupils were about two terms behind their classmates in English and around six months behind in mathematics. However, current data indicates that this gap has closed. Pupil premium pupils are making the same good progress as their classmates.
- The structure and content of pupils' writing in a range of subjects develops well as they progress through the school. However, the presentation of their work varies considerably.
- Although progress overall is good in Nursery and Reception, not enough boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress in mathematics because they have too few opportunities to investigate play in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The vast majority of teaching observed during the inspection was good or better, and records of leaders' checking show that this is typically the case.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children benefit from challenging activities when led by a teacher or when they work independently and make choices in the outside area. During the inspection, children had the chance to put on a puppet show. Using their imagination and working co-operatively, the children were asked to write about a pirate ship. Because the activities interested the children, their language developed well. The strong emphasis on promoting writing is also having an excellent impact on children's skills and progress.

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate their pupils. They provide a range of tasks that encourage pupils to want to succeed. This was particularly noticeable in an English lesson where Year 5 pupils had the opportunity to practise their questioning skills on the teacher who was acting a character from the story being studied. The pupils gradually made their questions more and more complex and showed a clear understanding of what strategies to use to reach the highest level possible.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are now holding teachers more rigorously to account and the help they have given teachers is starting to increase the rate of learning. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on multiplication, pupils made good progress in their understanding because the teacher used questions very well to prompt them to think of alternative ways of working out a problem. The pupils then had the confidence to work out more challenging multiplication problems correctly.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding, asking searching questions and encouraging discussion. For example in a mathematics lesson in Year 4, where teaching was good, pupils worked co-operatively in pairs and groups to develop their understanding of problem solving to manipulate tangrams. They clearly enjoyed the task and responded positively to the teacher's probing questioning.
- Teaching assistants work in partnership with teachers to support individuals, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Staff also support those entitled to pupil premium funding and carefully check their progress to ensure equality of opportunity for all.
- There is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' planning. Activities are not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' individual abilities. As a result, some lower-attaining pupils simply copy information because they do not understand clearly what it is they have to do and higher-attaining pupils are sometimes expected to undertake tasks that are too easy for them before moving on to more challenging work.
- Marking and feedback to pupils across the school varies and, in many lessons, it does not let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. Even when this is done, time is not always given for pupils to act on any comments made.
- In lessons where teaching requires improvement, teachers sometimes take too long to explain to pupils what they need to do, and this slows pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning and this is the case even when activities lack sufficient challenge. Pupils are polite and welcoming and keen to explain to visitors what they are learning.
 - Behaviour in lessons and around the school is of a consistently high standard.
 - Pupils say that behaviour is always well managed. They have a clear understanding of the sanctions that will be used if they should fall below teachers' high expectations. However, they told inspectors that teachers never allow learning to be disrupted by poor behaviour. Staff and parents agree.
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- Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe and well cared for. Pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups work and socialise well together, both in and out of the classroom. The school is a harmonious community that celebrates the diversity of its pupils' backgrounds.
- Pupils listen carefully to the explanations of staff and to the ideas of others. This was very well illustrated in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when pupils avidly sat on the carpet and listened to the teacher's explanation and then animatedly joined in a discussion about what they thought the answers to the teacher's questions might be.
- Pupils have a good understanding of issues around internet safety and about different forms of bullying. They say this is rare and, when it does occur, it is dealt with very effectively by the school. Parents confirm that they think the school deals effectively with bullying when it occurs.
- Attendance is consistently above average and punctuality to lessons is good.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils to do well. The headteacher provides very determined leadership, promoting a clear focus on continual improvement. He drives school improvement with a clearly articulated vision for the future. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who, through excellent teaching and coaching of other staff, is also promoting a further improvement.
 - Pupils' progress is checked regularly and underachievement is identified and tackled. Leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development, and appropriate priorities for action have been identified. The school's systems for monitoring and assessing its strengths and weaknesses are very well focused and accurately identify its priorities for improvement.
 - The school places a high priority on improving teaching and continued professional development. Teachers' performance is checked and information is used from lesson observations and from data about pupils' progress to decide on the next objectives in order to further develop individual performance.
 - The school has looked at the impact of the pupil premium on the progress of those who receive extra support. It has made sure that pupils achieved good standards at the end of Year 6. This year, it is funding more one-to-one tuition and small-group teaching of those pupils who are not making the progress expected of them.
 - The headteacher has strengthened the way in which teachers are appraised for their performance and does not allow staff to be rewarded by increased salaries unless they are successful in helping pupils make at least good progress.
 - School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed and they tackle any instances of discrimination.
 - Teachers use a broad range of topics to make learning stimulating in a range of subjects and pupils say they find the work they are set interesting. The school provides a wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities.
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- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key strength of the school, epitomised by a Year 4 religious education lesson, where pupils spoke confidently and accurately about Sikh lifestyles when presenting their group's work to the rest of the class.
 - The local authority is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has worked well with senior leaders.
 - The Parent View responses indicate that parents have a very positive view of the school, with all of those who responded saying they would recommend the school to another parent.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed. It challenges and supports the school and compares its performance with schools nationally. Governors have a deep insight into the quality of teaching. They ensure that the use of additional funds from the pupil premium improves the achievement of the pupils for whom the funds are intended. The governing body oversees the management of finance and resources expertly and ensures that the salary progression of staff is justified. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice and, as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117334
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	412514

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	481
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Mundy
Headteacher	Giovanni Gaidoni
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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