

Inspection of a good school: Fairfield Primary School

Glenfield Road, Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees TS19 7PW

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2022

Outcome

Fairfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a happy school. A strong, inclusive ethos permeates all aspects of school organisation and effectiveness. Relationships are strong and trusting. As one pupil explained: 'Our teachers invest in us.' Pupils thrive in this environment.

Classrooms are calm and inviting and very well resourced. Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to their learning and are highly focused on their lessons. This means lessons flow without interruption. Expectations for good behaviour are high. Such is the extent of leaders' work in this aspect of school life that pupils behave well because they know it is the right thing to do.

Incidents of bullying are uncommon. Pupils are confident that should an incident occur, adults in school would deal with it sensitively and effectively. Pupils know the various forms of bullying. They know how important it is to tell a trusted adult.

Playtimes are lively events. Pupils use this time to run off energy. Some pupils said that they would like more planned activities during this time. A quiet space is available for those pupils who find large spaces more challenging.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders prioritise reading across the school. High-quality texts support pupils' engagement in wider reading. An inviting library greets you on entry to the school. There are lots of books on display to stimulate conversation. As the headteacher said, 'I want the library to be like an inspiring bookshop.' He has fulfilled this aim. Books are carefully chosen. They hold great appeal to pupils and supplement the wider curriculum. They support the school's work on diversity and equality. Author visits throughout the year further stimulate pupils' interest in books.

Phonics lessons are consistent and follow a detailed structure. There are high levels of engagement in most lessons. Books for pupils to practise their reading are age-

appropriate. They are matched well to the letter sounds that pupils are learning, thus enabling pupils to become confident readers. Pupils receive additional same-day interventions to keep up with their peers from the start.

A new approach to the teaching of reading beyond phonics has recently been introduced. This has brought greater consistency to lessons. Curriculum plans map out how pupils' comprehension skills will build. There is a strong focus on extending pupils' vocabulary. Each classroom proudly displays their word of the day. Whole-class texts act as a stimulus for both reading and writing activities. Pupils can talk confidently and with enthusiasm about the stories they are studying. They can search for evidence to answer questions.

Leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic in their role. Some subject leaders are newly appointed and they feel well supported. Leaders have worked hard to craft curriculum plans that build pupils' knowledge and skills step by step. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their studies and enjoy learning. They can tell you what they learned last year and how this is helping them in their studies now. In some curriculum plans, it is less clear how a deeper level of understanding will be achieved. For example, in physical education, pupils are hugely enthusiastic and receive a rich diet of sporting activity. There is a strong focus on movement and personal development. Tactical awareness and strategy are less well defined.

In mathematics, leaders have very recently introduced a new scheme. Materials from the scheme provide coverage of mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers present tasks in a variety of ways. This is enabling pupils to gain mathematical confidence. Although more demanding work is planned, occasionally pupils do not always get onto it within a lesson.

Staff use a variety of approaches to check how pupils are progressing in their learning. Leaders have introduced a new system to record and track pupils' progress across each year. Progress statements align to a curriculum subject's core knowledge and skills. However, the way in which teachers use this assessment to plan subsequent learning tasks is not precise enough.

The curriculum for pupils' personal and social development is well considered by leaders. It is a high priority for all. Pupil representatives contribute to its content. They are rightly proud of their input. They have designed a record of achievement booklet and are busy planning a careers fair. There is an extensive list of wider experiences that pupils can access. Most notably, a weekly chess lesson is nurturing pupils' resilience.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers are adept at making changes to planned activities to make sure that pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and extra-curricular activities. The special educational needs coordinator is knowledgeable and experienced. She makes sure that further support and advice are sought when needed. Parents, carers and pupils are kept fully involved in this, which strengthens relationships further.

Children get off to a good start in early years. A strong focus on establishing good routines and encouraging independence helps children settle in quickly. Adults are skilled

and knowledgeable practitioners. Their interventions are timely and pertinent. Curriculum plans map out what children need to know to be successful in Year 1.

Governors know the school well. They use their skills effectively to offer support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff recognise the significant role they play in keeping pupils safe. All staff receive regular and relevant safeguarding training, so that they know how to report any concerns. Timely reminders from the designated safeguarding lead keep staff aware of, and up to date with, contextual safeguarding issues.

Comprehensive safety recruitment checks are completed on anyone wishing to work at the school. Leaders' record-keeping is meticulous and checked by governors routinely.

Leaders work well with outside agencies to protect pupils when the need arises.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have structured their curriculum plans to build and consolidate pupils' subject-specific knowledge and skills over time. Opportunities to extend pupils' thinking or deepen pupils' understanding of core concepts is less clear. As a result, this can limit pupils' depth of learning. Leaders need to strengthen this aspect of curriculum planning, so that more pupils receive increasing opportunities to extend their thinking and gain a deeper understanding of key concepts, thus leading to increased proportions of pupils successfully achieving greater depth.
- Leaders' new assessment tracking system is not fully embedded. There remain anomalies in some curriculum subjects, between the progress statements within the assessment tool, compared with the school's curriculum plans. This means that there is sometimes a disconnect between what is being taught and what is being assessed. Leaders need to tackle this, to enable teachers to have an accurate oversight of pupils' progress and attainment to plan their future learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	134621
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10240451
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Beverley Jones
Headteacher	Andrew Ruffell
Website	www.fairfieldprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average. It has two classes in each year group.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and curriculum subject leaders.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- The inspector met with the local authority senior school improvement officer and the new school improvement officer for the school.

- The inspector conducted deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work in lessons. Additional discussions were held with the subject leaders for computing as well as personal, social and health education.
- The inspector viewed documentation relating to safeguarding. This included talking to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and checked the school's single central register.
- The inspector reviewed the free-text responses of parents and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to the staff survey and met with staff.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspector considered the responses to the pupil survey and met with pupil groups to discuss their understanding of behaviour and how to keep themselves safe.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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