

Fairmeadows Foundation Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112982
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378625
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Doris Bell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Murray
Headteacher	Clare Hodson-Walker
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2006
School address	Fairfield Crescent Swadlincote DE11 0SW
Telephone number	01283 211019
Fax number	01283 226900
Email address	info@fairmeadows.derbyshire.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	17–18 January 2012
Inspection number	378625



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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 assesses 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 0300 123 4234, 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 information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012



Introduction

Inspection team

Doris Bell

Additional inspector

David Westall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 8 members of staff during 10 lessons, covering approximately 5 hours of teaching. As well as observing full or part lessons, inspectors spent time observing sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds. They also heard pupils read, watched them being taught in small groups and individually, analysed their work, and discussed their learning with them. Meetings were held with senior and middle managers, and representatives of the governing body. A range of documentation was analysed, including information relating to the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils, as well as the school improvement plan, governing body minutes and evidence of monitoring and evaluation. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers, and analysed 58 parental questionnaire responses, as well as responses to the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This average-sized primary school has an above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most of these needs are moderate learning difficulties but there is a significant minority of pupils with behavioural and/or emotional needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils come from white British backgrounds and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school met the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has achieved the Gold Activemark, the Bronze Eco-schools Award, and the Silver Artsmark. It also has its own breakfast club.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. By the time they leave the school, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders drive improvement well and staff readily respond to the guidance they receive. The systems in place to check and improve teaching and learning are effective in tackling weaknesses and moving the school forward.
- The quality of teaching is good. Individual progress is assessed and tracked meticulously. The information is used effectively in planning and to adjust learning in lessons. However, it is not brought together systematically at whole-school level to provide an immediate, clear overview of progress in and across year groups.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They say behaviour is almost always good, and any poor behaviour is dealt with swiftly, commenting that 'Teachers wouldn't allow it'.
- Most parents and carers are very positive about the school and what it does for them and their children. Those spoken to talked about the 'family atmosphere' where 'children thrive'.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to succeed in all they do. This is because the curriculum is well-planned to meet their needs. Where relevant, subjects are brought together in themes that interest pupils, promote basic skills and motivate pupils, especially boys, to write more and more often.
- A wide range of activities, in and beyond the normal school day, promote pupils' learning and personal development well, including their understanding of safe and healthy living. Pupils feel safe, and know how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance is average. This is largely due to holidays being taken during term time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Summarise assessment information more precisely to provide a clearer, more easily accessible overview of progress over time that can be used to greater effect in strategic planning.
- Improve pupils' attendance by becoming more effective in helping parents to understand the impact of attendance on their children's progress, and particularly to ensure holidays taken during term time are reduced.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers say their children make good progress. Inspection evidence endorses this view. Typically, children start school with skills below those expected for their age. Some have especially low literacy skills at this point and, despite their good progress, remain below average as they start Year 1. The majority, however, reach the levels expected for their age, including in reading. The systematic and successful teaching of how to link letters and sounds, leads to above-average standards in reading in Year 2, and well-above-average standards in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils. Well-briefed support staff are skilled at breaking down learning into the much smaller steps these pupils need to take to close the gaps in their learning.

Pupils enjoy reading. They select from a wide range of books in the well-stocked library, and demonstrate good comprehension skills as they use books and computers to find and sift information. This is particularly evident in themed work, where there are also many examples of writing in different styles for different audiences and purposes. While weaknesses remain in spelling, punctuation and presentation, pupils use ever more adventurous vocabulary as they write. This was noted in Year 2, as they described 'nocturnal' animals, wrote about the light of the moon being 'like snow' and stars 'glistening like glitter'.

Pupils have good mathematical and scientific skills, gained through their enthusiastic involvement in a wide range of practical activities that demonstrate the relevance of those skills in everyday life. The Year 6 pupils' work on micro-organisms was a good example of this, as was their interpretation of data using spread sheets and various graphs and charts as they analysed responses to questionnaires.

Quality of teaching

Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to adjust learning during lessons in response to pupils' progress, and to plan what pupils need to do next. The drive to help pupils become more independent in their learning has been successful. Open-ended questions, carefully targeted at individuals, encourage pupils to think for themselves. This was noted in several lessons and was particularly effective in a Year 6 English lesson, where pupils debated the pros and cons of a range of issues in preparation for persuasive writing. The excellent relationships pupils build up with staff and with each other, combined with the wide range of imaginative teaching approaches used, ensure that learning continues at a good pace in almost all

lessons.

Pupils know the levels at which they are working. They are keenly aware of their targets and know what they need to do to reach them. Teachers' marking helps in this, particularly in English, where it almost always gives pupils guidance on how to improve. Marking is not always as good in other subjects, and opportunities are sometimes missed to mark writing when it occurs in them. The well-planned curriculum guides teaching well. The successful interplay of skills-based and theme-based learning contributes to the good progress pupils are making. It was demonstrated well in the Year 2 work referred to earlier in this report, and in the work on Dr Barnardo in Year 5.

Teaching and the curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect on the world around them, to distinguish right from wrong and reflect on the impact their actions have on others. They relate well to others, and successfully develop the skills and knowledge that will help them in later life. All of this is recognised by parents and carers, almost all of whom feel their children are taught well.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations of their behaviour, and a very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, and all of those who spoke to the inspection team, said that behaviour is good. Some felt their children's learning was disrupted by bad behaviour, but pupils do not agree. They recognise that there are some pupils in school who have difficulty managing their own behaviour and need help to do this, but they report that staff provide that help, and that pupils generally behave well. They are confident that any untoward behaviour is dealt with effectively and they trust any member of staff to help them should they have any concerns at all. These very positive attitudes contribute effectively to their learning and personal development, and are fostered well initially in Nursery and Reception.

Pupils are keen to do their best, collaborate well in lessons and have a strong determination to succeed. Pupils are reflective and caring. The concern they show for others mirrors the care and concern the school shows to them. For example, a wide range of support is given to different groups of pupils, through the breakfast club, nurture provision and individual and small group work. Pupils are adamant that they know of no bullying, and that the school provides a very safe and secure environment in which they can work and play.

The school council has used its powers with some considerable energy to promote pupils' understanding of healthy living. As a result of the work of the Eco group, all pupils in Key Stage 2 see themselves as 'planet protectors', and the school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about the world of work. For example, pupils have to apply and are interviewed for different jobs around the school, they are rewarded for their work, and can spend their rewards in the 'golden shop'. Despite the school's efforts, attendance has fallen from above average to average over time. Although it is beginning to improve, the practice of taking pupils on holiday during term time means that valuable learning time is lost for some pupils,

and this impedes their learning.

Leadership and management

The school leadership has tackled the issues from the previous inspection well. The re-structured curriculum has resulted in better, more stimulating teaching and learning that have successfully promoted writing and raised achievement. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is equally stimulating. Children have many opportunities to learn indoors and out. Their learning and personal development are promoted effectively through a good range of activities, some of which they select themselves, while others are specifically directed by adults.

Leadership roles have been distributed effectively among staff, and professional development is targeted well to meet the school's well-defined priorities. Governance is good. Through its presence in school, and its links with different members of staff, the governing body gains valuable first-hand information, which it uses well to hold the school to account. The governing body shares the school's strong determination to achieve the best for all pupils. However, leaders do not have a clear view of pupils' progress over time that can be used at a strategic level to achieve that aim more rapidly. Nonetheless, other aspects of the school's self-evaluation are good and give an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. Along with the improvements since the last inspection, this demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.

Safeguarding is given high priority. All requirements are fully met and training, including that for child protection, is up to date. The school is vigilant in supporting pupils whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in this inclusive school, which works hard and successfully to break down stereotypes and tackle any form of discrimination. The school's logs show that behavioural and racist incidents are uncommon, but when they do occur, they are appropriately recorded, and dealt with effectively. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn about life in Britain's democratic, multicultural society, as well as opening pupils' minds to life in other countries. This is done through visitors and visits, for example to different places of worship and to Derbyshire's multicultural centre, through themes such as the rainforest, and through studies of famous people from around the world. As a result of all of this, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairmeadows Foundation Primary School, Swadlincote, DE11 0SW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. It was good to hear that you enjoy school, and to listen to your views on what you do there. You and your parents and carers are right in thinking that you go to a good school, where you are kept safe, learn to keep yourselves safe, and make good progress in your learning. You certainly learn very quickly how to read and write and, by the time you leave the school, you do these things well. It was interesting to watch and listen to the debates Year 6 pupils were having, and to read the lovely sentences Year 2 pupils wrote about the night sky to accompany their pictures.

The school leaders work hard to improve the school for you. You help them in this because you behave well, care for each other, and undertake many important jobs around school. We were particularly impressed with the work of the school council on healthy eating, and the work of the Eco group in raising your awareness of the need to care for the planet. You told us there was no bullying in the school, and that 'teachers wouldn't allow it', and it was good to hear that you know you always have someone to turn to if you do need help. We have asked the school to work on two things to help you make even more progress.

- Bring together all the information it has about your learning so that it has a clearer and more easily accessible overview of your progress over time.
- Work with your parents and carers to improve your attendance by reducing the number of holidays taken during term time.

We hope that you will help the school to do these things by continuing to work hard, and by trying your very best to attend school as regularly as possible. We also hope you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives, as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell
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 **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**