

Fairway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103330
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376878
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	David Shears

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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Lowther
Headteacher	Christine O'Malley
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by eight different teachers, and held meetings with representative members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, planning documentation, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 110 parents and carers, 25 members of staff and 86 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of teaching and learning in consistently helping all groups of pupils to make good progress, especially boys in writing.
- They considered the development of core skills within the curriculum, particularly in writing.
- Inspectors assessed the effectiveness of the leaders and managers in bringing about improvements to ensure better progress.
- They explored provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the progress they make in developing their communication, language and literacy skills.

Information about the school

Fairway is smaller than the average primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British origin, with a small minority from a variety of other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Their needs are mainly moderate learning difficulties, and some have speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average, and none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who arrive or leave at times other than the beginning of the school year is above the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Reception class. A breakfast club and after-school care on site are managed by the governing body, and were included in the inspection. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and the Impetus award in recognition of its work in promoting an understanding of disability.

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

Fairway is a satisfactory school. In the majority of year groups pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning, although this is improving and now good in some. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to be done to improve. For example, attendance, which has been an issue for the school, has been a clear focus for development. Pupils are encouraged to attend regularly and dedicated staff rigorously follow up absences. This has resulted in much improvement so that attendance is now above average, and the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has dramatically reduced. Senior leaders and managers have worked hard to engage parents and carers, both in the school and in their children's learning, and this is now a clear strength.

The school places considerable emphasis on the pastoral care of its pupils and their families. As a result, pupils feel safe and enjoy school. There is a pleasant, welcoming atmosphere and pupils behave well towards other adults and each other. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy through exercise and eating sensibly. They often choose the healthy options available at lunchtime. The care that pupils receive extends to those in the local area where they make a good contribution to the community.

Pupils enjoy their lessons because teachers provide first-hand experiences so that pupils can learn more effectively. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to practise their core skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, although teachers do not always use assessment information carefully enough to ensure that the work is matched closely to their individual ability levels, and this limits their potential to make good progress. The school is rightly focusing on pupils' speaking and listening skills to improve writing, although this is still at an early stage of development. Pupils have targets that are clearly written in their books. However, these are not referred to enough in lessons to help pupils remember to apply them in their work.

Leaders and managers monitor the school's work methodically, identifying its strengths and tackling weaknesses through a detailed school improvement plan that contains the right areas for improvement. These measures have led to both attendance and academic progress rising, and underpin a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school holds regular and frequent meetings to track how well pupils are performing, identify those who are at risk of underachievement and

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give them extra support so they make better progress. However, monitoring does not always focus sufficiently on the school's main priorities. For example, pupils who arrive during the school year are helped to settle quickly and feel included in school, but assessments to gauge their current level of attainment are not done quickly enough to ensure they begin making good progress immediately. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, on the other hand, children are assessed soon after arrival and settle well into school. A number of staff are relatively new to their posts and are making a good start, although there is no formal plan to identify the strengths and guide areas for improvement within the Early Years Foundation Stage. Lesson planning is effective, particularly with regard to teacher-led activities, although it does not always include enough clear opportunities for child-initiated learning.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop teaching and learning further and so improve progress and raise attainment by:
 - using assessment consistently well to ensure that all work is carefully matched to the ability of pupils
 - improving opportunities for speaking and listening in all lessons
 - making use of pupils' targets within lessons so that they apply these more thoroughly in their work.
- Improve the wider curriculum by ensuring that literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are consistently planned for and practised across a wide variety of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by ensuring that:
 - monitoring clearly focuses on the school's main priorities
 - new pupils that arrive during the school year are quickly assessed so that they begin to make good progress as soon as possible.
- Develop the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that planning for child-initiated play helps to support learning and is monitored for its effectiveness
 - rigorously and formally evaluating the provision to identify key areas that will have an impact on children's learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Children start school with skills and abilities that are below the levels expected nationally and sometimes well below, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Overall they make satisfactory progress through the school, although in some classes they make good progress when the teaching is more effective. All

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groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able pupils, make at least satisfactory progress overall. The gap in attainment between boys and girls is narrowing, but is still wider than that found nationally, particularly in writing. Where learning is good, pupils benefit from work that is tailored to meet their needs. For example, in one lesson where pupils were learning to research aspects of a person’s life, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were given a prepared worksheet that gave clear prompts to help them structure their work. However, more typically there is not enough attention given in lessons to ensuring that pupils are provided with effective support or challenge to enable them to make good progress. For example, in a numeracy lesson observed all pupils were expected to complete the same work, which was too difficult for some and not challenging enough for others.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that they can use the ‘worry box’ or talk through any problems they may have with an adult. Most pupils display good behaviour and any pupils who find this difficult are managed well. Pupils make a good contribution to the school through the school council and by taking on responsibilities as play leaders and class monitors. They extend their help to the wider community. For example, the ‘green team’ pick up litter in the local area, older pupils take part in an intergenerational project with local senior citizens, and pupils sing carols in the city centre. The school supports a good number of charities, including supporting the Birmingham mission with gifts from the harvest festival that are distributed to those in need. The social and moral development of pupils is strong. They have a good understanding of right and wrong. Their spiritual understanding is developing well, although their experience of people from other cultures and religions is more limited.

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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	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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The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

3

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are eager to learn and have positive attitudes. Teachers consistently tell pupils what they are going to learn in lessons and help them to know when they have been successful. Pupils are grouped by ability and have targets for improvement, although teachers do not remind them of these enough, limiting their impact. Teaching assistants give appropriate support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils work well together, although there are not always enough planned opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons. Marking in English is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers give appropriate praise and clearly tell pupils the next steps in learning. This is less consistent in numeracy.

The school has based the curriculum securely on practical learning that enables pupils to access a variety of topics. Lessons are enriched through having special visitors to the school and pupils have the opportunity to go out on school trips and experience a residential visit. For example, pupils practise football skills with coaches from Aston Villa football club and have the opportunity to learn musical instruments such as the keyboard, steel pans, violin and guitar. They also learn to speak French. Pupils have the opportunity to extend learning by joining in a range of school clubs. While the enrichment of the curriculum is a strength and pupils enthusiastically take part in such opportunities, these experiences are not sufficiently utilised to engage pupils in practising their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Good care, support and guidance are clearly evident as a central focus for the school. In particular, the care for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is strong and has resulted in these pupils making good improvements in their behaviour, confidence and attitudes to work. Transition arrangements for pupils joining the school and moving to secondary school are good. The breakfast club provides an excellent start to the day and pupils clearly benefit from the relaxed, sociable and structured provision offered. Similarly, the after-school club is a well-organised and well-managed provision that is much enjoyed by the pupils who attend.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff have a good understanding of what is going well and identify areas for improvement through an analysis of data and information from pupil progress meetings. The progress made by some groups is carefully analysed, for example girls and boys, although not others such as the progress of pupils who arrive within a school year. Challenging targets are set for pupils, although they are not always achieved.

The governing body is supportive of the school and is well organised. It is becoming increasingly aware of the school's data and its members visit the school as part of the monitoring process, although such visits are not focused enough on the school's main priorities, making it difficult for them to provide effective challenge. School leaders and managers have worked hard to engage parents and carers in many ways, including social events as well as meetings to discuss learning. A parent support worker provides a valuable service in helping parents and carers to feel part of school life.

Partnerships with other agencies concerned with pupils' learning are satisfactory, although those related to pupils' well-being are good. The school clearly tackles discrimination well, particular in relation to disabilities. This has resulted in it receiving the Impetus award. However, there are still disparities in progress, particularly between boys and girls. The school has employed strategies to address this, but has not yet managed to close the gap. The arrangements for safeguarding are secure and ensure the safety of pupils and staff. The school has focused its efforts on promoting cohesion within its own community and this has been very successful. The focus is now widening to include the local area, with pupils gaining a growing understanding of the local community. There is an international link with Trinidad and Tobago, although this is not yet embedded. Pupils' understanding of community cohesion in the national context is not so well developed.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 make a positive start to their schooling because of carefully planned induction arrangements that help them to settle quickly into a classroom that is bright and interesting. Good relationships are quickly established with parents and carers, and close attention paid to the welfare of all so that children feel safe and secure. While parents and carers feel able to talk through any concerns, the information they receive about what their children are learning is not as strong. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and receive appropriate support.

There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, although the latter are not always planned carefully enough to enable children to make the most of them. Moreover, there is currently no system to track individuals at these times to analyse their learning. Teaching assistants work well with the teacher to assess children’s progress, and well-organised learning journals chart this progress across the six areas of learning. This informs future planning and takes into account the interests of children. While there is generally an appropriate balance of learning in all areas, there is not always sufficient emphasis on reinforcing their communication, language and literacy skills. The outdoor area has been recently developed and is providing good opportunities for children to learn in a safe environment. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. The good improvements made to provision indicate that some aspects of self-evaluation are effective, but it is not carried out with enough rigour to clearly identify how areas for improvement are to be achieved in a formal action plan.

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

An above-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority were positive in their views about the school. All agreed that their children enjoyed school and almost all agreed that their children were kept

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safe, that the teaching was good and that the school was effectively led and managed. A few parents and carers were unsure about whether their children were well-prepared for the future. Inspectors found that arrangements to secure their well-being when moving to a new class or school were effective, and that academically, their preparation for continued learning is satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fairway 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 179 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	75	27	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	78	23	21	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	67	61	35	32	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	57	43	39	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	75	68	33	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	70	64	36	33	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	63	37	34	2	2	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)	51	46	45	41	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	62	56	44	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	59	54	42	38	2	2	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	57	52	43	39	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	83	75	26	24	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	82	75	27	25	1	1	0	0

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.

7 October 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Fairway Primary School, Birmingham, B38 8XQ

Thank you for the welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. It was lovely to meet you all and find out about your school. You told us that you feel safe in school because there are adults around you who can help if you have a problem. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy by eating sensibly and taking exercise. We were pleased with the way you behaved in class and around the school, and appreciated your enthusiasm in taking responsibilities and helping others, both in school and in your local community. You told us that you enjoy school and we can see why. Your teachers plan exciting activities both in school and outside for you to enjoy and learn from. It is not surprising that your attendance is above average.

You go to a school that gives you a satisfactory education, which means that some things are good but others can be improved. We found that most of you make satisfactory progress in your learning, although we can see that it is improving so that some of you are now making good progress. Well done.

We have asked your teachers to make sure that you all get work that is just right for you. You can help by telling your teachers if you think it is too easy or too hard. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to practise your speaking and listening skills and also your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in lots of subjects, and to keep reminding you of your group targets. I wonder if you can think of any ways to help you to remember your targets when you are working?

We have asked those in charge of the school to keep checking the school's priorities and to make sure that staff quickly find out what new pupils to the school know, so that they can make good progress in their learning straight away. We have asked the staff who teach the youngest children to help them make the most of the activities that they choose, and learn lots of different things. We have also asked them to check how well they are learning, and think of the best ways to make it even better.

Thank you again for looking after us so well. We wish you all the very best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely

David Shears
Lead inspector

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