

Fairmeadows Foundation Primary School

Fairfield Crescent, Newhall, Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 0SW

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have been too slow to raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, particularly in reading.
- Leaders' improvement planning and the management of teachers' performance do not focus sharply enough on raising the attainment and accelerating the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The governing body has not been stringent enough in challenging leaders about pupils' attainment and progress, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils' learning well enough to plan next steps in learning and ensure that work is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading are too low. Too few pupils achieve as well as they should in key stage 2 or achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- The proportions of pupils achieving at greater depth are too low in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has brought ambition and drive to improve the school and is supported by school staff. There is a culture of improvement.
- Leaders have put into place a range of new approaches and initiatives that are bringing about improvement in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is close to, or above, that seen nationally.
- Children make a good start to their education in the early years. The majority of children make good progress and achieve a good level of development.
- Pupils' behaviour and conduct are good throughout the school. There are good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Leaders' and staff's commitment to the well-being, personal development and safety of each pupil is evident in the school's caring culture.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should bring about more rapid improvement by ensuring that:
 - improvement planning focuses more sharply on the progress of different groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged
 - staff performance management targets are ambitious and focus on improving the quality of teaching and rates of pupils' progress, particularly in reading
 - they develop the effectiveness of middle leaders in planning actions that will raise pupils' attainment and accelerate progress.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in all classes by ensuring that all teachers:
 - have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged
 - improve their accuracy in identifying the next steps in pupils' learning, so work is consistently well matched to all pupils' needs
 - refine approaches to teaching reading skills and give greater emphasis to making sure that pupils use and accurately apply their phonics, spelling, grammar and punctuation skills in their work
 - improve pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance by ensuring that the governing body:
 - more effectively challenges leaders about the performance of different groups of pupils in different subjects
 - checks more closely the impact of the use of the additional funding, particularly the pupil premium, to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management should be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have been too slow in raising pupils' attainment and accelerating their progress, particularly in reading. Standards in reading have been too low for too long. While the new headteacher is creating a culture of greater ambition, too many pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- The new headteacher has brought drive and ambition to the school and is instilling impetus to bring about positive change. He is creating a cohesive team of staff committed to improving the attainment and progress of all pupils. The school has a clear direction of travel. However, overall, teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve are too low.
- Leaders have introduced new initiatives and revised approaches to teaching many aspects of the curriculum. These include, for example, 'talk for mathematics' to promote reasoning skills, and the development of a 'mastery' approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics. In English, leaders have introduced a new system for teaching reading and inference skills, and have provided a greater range of texts to stimulate the interest of pupils of all abilities. The 'rapid response' phonics initiative is helping pupils to catch up and improve their reading skills. These, and other initiatives, are improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, many are at an early stage and have not yet had sufficient impact on improving pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's performance and actions needed to bring about improvement. Leaders' plans for improvement and the management of teachers' performance, however, do not focus sharply enough on raising attainment and promoting the rapid progress of different groups of pupils, including the most able and those who are disadvantaged.
- The headteacher is developing the role of middle leaders to help drive improvement. He has ensured that they have received relevant training. Middle leaders are beginning to have impact by checking the quality of teaching and leading staff training, particularly for English and mathematics. Middle leaders are not yet fully effective in designing focused plans for improvement to bring about more rapid advancement in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding increasingly effectively to improve the achievement, well-being and confidence of disadvantaged pupils. A family support worker is working with families to improve attendance. Leaders have raised the profile of the needs of disadvantaged pupils and teachers are now checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils more carefully. However, the impact of the spending of the funding and actions taken have not been analysed thoroughly enough to ensure that the funding is having the maximum impact on accelerating disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Leaders have organised the school's broad and balanced curriculum by themes, to engage pupils' interest and make learning more meaningful. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs helps to ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

education is effective. The school offers many sports clubs, and leaders use the additional funding for physical education and sports well to improve rates of pupils' participation in sporting activities, including a wide range of inter-school events.

- Leaders and staff work effectively with other schools to develop, for example, teachers' skills in accurately assessing pupils' learning by looking at pupils' work with teachers from different schools. The local authority have supported leaders in developing the accuracy of their self-evaluation of the school's performance.
- Leaders make increasingly effective use of the additional funding to support those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to plan and implement a range of specific interventions. The progress of these pupils overall is improving, and in line with that of other pupils in the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has not been sufficiently stringent in holding the school to account about the achievement of different groups of pupils. Governors have not been effective enough in analysing the impact of additional funding, particularly the pupil premium, on the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing body is forward looking, and has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and aspects in which it needs to improve. Governors work closely with the headteacher to help bring about improvement. They undertake regular visits to the school to meet with middle leaders, to review, for example, safeguarding arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a clear ethos of care in the school and a culture of promoting pupils' well-being and safety. The family support worker is helping to establish effective links between home and school for some parents.
- Leaders ensure that the single central register is accurate and up to date, and that recruitment checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children are thorough. The designated leaders for safeguarding ensure that all members of staff and the governing body are trained and kept up to date with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education. Staff and the governing body have received training, for example, on the government's 'Prevent' duty.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations, and have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils say they feel safe and almost all the parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe in school. School displays show the work the school has done to teach pupils about anti-bullying. Pupils are certain that incidents of bullying are rare and they are very confident that adults will deal with any concerns that they may have. Effective systems for recording incidents or concerns mean that leaders have a comprehensive overview and take swift actions to resolve them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Overall, teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan learning. Too often, pupils do not make the progress they should because work is not well matched to their needs and ability. Sometimes, pupils are not clear on the purpose of what they are learning because teachers do not explain why it is important. Too often, the work that pupils are given is too easy for the most able pupils or too difficult for the least able.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in the quality and quantity of their work. Often, the quality of writing in subjects such as science or history is lower than that in English. In mathematics, pupils often do not move on to more challenging work quickly enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- The quality of phonics teaching is inconsistent. In the early years and key stage 1, teachers are not consistently precise in teaching the skills appropriate to pupils' needs. They are not thorough enough in reminding pupils about their phonics skills or setting high enough expectations for pupils to apply these accurately to their reading and writing in different subjects. Many systems have been introduced or developed to help raise standards. These are not, however, as effective as they should be. Reading records, for example, do not accurately identify what pupils need to focus on to improve.
- Teaching assistants are generally used effectively to support the learning of pupils of different abilities, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, the impact of this extra support is not as good as it could be, because the adults are not skilled in adjusting work to meet the needs of pupils who require more support or challenge to help them make progress.
- Teachers are responding positively to the leadership of the new headteacher and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is improving. Teachers are actively raising the profile and promoting positive attitudes to reading, both at home and in school. This was evidenced in various displays in the school and pupils in key stage 2 who said, 'We have better reading books now. We do more reading and there's a much bigger range.'
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers use a range of teaching approaches, such as the use of apparatus or visual imagery, to support pupils' learning effectively. Teachers have sound subject knowledge which they use to plan lessons and ask pupils questions which takes their learning forward.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Pupils are generally enthusiastic, eager to learn and determined to do their best. Teachers praise pupils' efforts, which builds pupils' confidence and creates a positive and productive atmosphere for learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils spoke very positively about the 'Learning Warriors' initiative in which teachers encourage pupils to reproduce good work and behave well. Pupils were able to explain that work to encourage a 'growth mindset' was 'to encourage yourself to do better'. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- The school has a strong ethos of friendship and respect for others. Adults are positive role models and pupils respect each other and their school environment. Elections every year for team captains, in which pupils write and present their ideas, give pupils an understanding of the democratic process.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe and spoke with confidence about how to staff stay safe online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous with each other, staff and visitors. They conduct themselves well at all times of the school day. Pupils are respectful to their peers, their teachers and their school. Playtimes are calm and friendly.
- Leaders and other staff have high expectations of standards for behaviour and, where there are any concerns, take effective action. The very large majority of parents say pupils are well behaved and that their child is safe.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes to their work and attempt all that is asked of them. They only lose focus when teachers give them work that is not well matched to their ability or needs.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance, overall, is in line with the national average. Leaders carefully check the attendance of individual pupils and take appropriate action, including the involvement of the family support worker, to improve the persistent absence of a small group of pupils. As a result of leaders' concerted efforts, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving. However, this is still too low compared to all pupils nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016, the school met the criteria for a coasting school due to low standards in reading. Attainment and progress in reading are still too low in key stage 2 and well below the national averages. Attainment and progress are also low in writing at the end of key stage 2. Too many pupils do not achieve the standard expected for their age or make the progress they should from their starting points.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is well below that seen nationally, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' work shows that many pupils are now making good progress across the school.

However, this is not consistent and some pupils in some subjects, particularly the most able and those that are disadvantaged, do not make the progress they should.

- The proportions of pupils achieving at greater depth at the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are below those seen nationally.
- Many pupils achieve well are making good progress across the school. The quality of pupils' work and their presentation, including handwriting, is improving. However, the quality of pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics is inconsistent.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected for their age in mathematics in key stage 2 has improved compared to 2016, including the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth, however, is still too low.
- In key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is close to, or above, that seen nationally. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. The proportion of pupils achieving at greater depth has also improved.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the early years has improved and is now close to the national average. Children make good progress in the early years.
- Leaders have acted effectively upon the recommendations of a recent external review of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The progress of these pupils is tracked closely. As a result of carefully targeted intervention and support, most of these pupils make rapid progress from their starting points.

Early years provision

Good

- Children in the early years make a good start to their school life. They have a sound start in the Nursery class and make good progress during their time in the Reception Year. Children enter the early years with skills and abilities broadly below those typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development is close to the national average and has improved since 2016. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The early years leader and the class teacher work closely together to develop effective links between the Nursery and Reception Year. They are effective in identifying strengths and have a clear action plan to tackle aspects that need to be improved. Leaders manage transition arrangements to and from the early years well. Children settle quickly and engage positively in the tasks provided for them, and in their independent learning. They talk positively and confidently about what they are doing and about their learning.
- The teacher provides a stimulating and engaging environment for children to learn. The indoor- and outdoor-learning spaces are well planned and resourced. The teacher and adults support children's learning well. The proportion of children who achieve the early learning goals for reading is high, showing the impact of the teaching of phonics and reading skills in the early years. However, phonics teaching is not consistently well matched to specific abilities to ensure that all children make the progress they should.
- Staff check children's attainment and progress closely and ensure that judgements are

secure through moderation with the local authority. They are quick to identify and tackle gaps in children's learning and development. Leaders have targeted resources, such as the pupil premium and funding to support children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, well. As a result, children's 'learning journey' records of development show that disadvantaged children and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.

- Links with parents are good. Parents contribute to the ongoing assessment of children's learning. The school is working in partnership with parents and has established effective home-school liaison.
- Children behave very well in the early years and enjoy their learning. Leaders and other staff manage the safety and well-being of children well. Safeguarding is effective and all statutory responsibilities are met.

School details

Unique reference number	112982
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10023229

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation/maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Henry Murray
Headteacher	Andrew Reeves
Telephone number	01283 211019
Website	www.fairmeadows.net
Email address	headteacher@fairmeadows.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2012

Information about this school

- Fairmeadows Foundation Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school has a Nursery and separate classes for each year group.
- The headteacher took up his post permanently in November 2016. He was the interim headteacher from September 2016.
- There have been significant staff changes since September 2016.
- The school runs before- and after-school clubs.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are below those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, but also met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, including many jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils reading, talked with them about their school and looked at examples of their work.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, middle leaders, the school's designated lead for safeguarding, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's self-evaluation of its current performance and its plans for improvement; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils; the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.
- The inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of each day. Account was taken of the 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 59 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nina Bee

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew Lakatos

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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