

Fairway Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103330
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323803
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	101
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Lowther
Headteacher	Christine O'Malley
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Muirfield Gardens Kings Norton Birmingham B38 8XQ
Telephone number	0121 4643200
Fax number	0121 4643201

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairway Primary is a small school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but there is a range of minority ethnic groups represented within the school. No children are in the early stages of learning English. There is an above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has grown in size over the last two years following the news that the school was not to be closed, as had been expected. Some year groups are consequently larger than others and there is an above average proportion of pupils joining the school in all classes throughout the year. The school has one Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Currently, the headteacher is supporting another local school for part of each week and the deputy headteacher takes over the role of acting headteacher in her absence. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award and the Impetus Award in recognition of its work in promoting an understanding of disability.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fairway Primary is a good school. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection under the strong leadership of the headteacher. As one parent explained, 'In the last three years, the school has gone forward in leaps and bounds.' Pupils' attainment and progress have risen steadily over the last two years and standards are now broadly average by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. These rising standards are the result of good teaching, especially in the upper classes. There is a strong commitment to improving the education provided for all pupils which is ensuring that teaching and the curriculum meet pupils' learning needs well. Most pupils are keen to come to school and enjoy their lessons.

Children start in the EYFS with levels of skills that are below those expected for their age. The range of knowledge and experiences of some children is extremely low. They make good progress in the Reception class and, although they enjoy their activities, standards remain below average when they enter Year 1. Progress across Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but it accelerates again in Key Stage 2 so pupils achieve well. There has been an effective focus on improving teaching and learning of mathematics with the result that standards are significantly higher than at the previous inspection. Standards in reading and writing have also improved but not to the same extent and boys make less progress than the girls, especially in writing. This has been accurately identified by the school and staff are developing a range of positive strategies to more effectively engage boys' interest in writing, but it is too soon to see if they are fully effective. The more able pupils are also making better progress than in the past, but are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and they make good progress from their different starting points.

The pastoral and personal care given to all pupils is a particular strength of the school. Fairway is a very inclusive school and pupils of all abilities and needs are accepted, some with significant emotional, behavioural and/or physical needs. They are given sensitive support which enables them to settle very well and they start to make the same positive progress as their peers. Pupils respond very well to the excellent role models of staff. They are caring of one another and very supportive. The 'buddies' system, where pupils of different ages work and play together at different times during the week, results in pupils' good relationships and understanding of each other's similarities as well as their differences. Pupils' contribution to the life of the school is good and they enjoy taking a wide range of responsibilities. The academic support and guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. Some good strategies have been introduced to help pupils understand how well they are doing and to enable them to understand how to improve. These procedures are still new and not yet consistently used so they are not yet having sufficient impact on supporting pupils' further improvement.

Leadership and management are good and effective in moving the school forward. Under the clear focus of the headteacher and with the expertise of the deputy headteacher, the senior leadership team evaluates effectively the school's strengths and weaknesses. What the school needs to do to improve is identified accurately. The school is well supported by a knowledgeable governing body who take an active part in financial strategic planning. The school's recent track record of good school improvement and the commitment of all staff to this continuing process show their good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a much narrower range of knowledge and skills than is found nationally when they start in Reception, especially in language development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress across all areas of the EYFS curriculum but standards remain below average, especially in language, by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers work closely with children's families and the daily communication between the staff and parents ensures children feel confident and secure. Children's welfare is successfully promoted and children with various forms of learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their independence nurtured. The teachers and learning support assistants understand how these young children learn and provide exciting tasks that promote their curiosity and interest. Children's interests influence curricular planning so they are well motivated to learn. The classroom is well resourced and there are plenty of opportunities for children to plan their own activities, to experiment and to explore ideas in the classroom and in the safe area outside. Leadership of the EYFS is good. Assessment of children's attainment is used to set the next steps in learning but the teacher is now aiming to help children identify more effectively for themselves the areas in which they could improve. Recent changes to the building have significantly improved the space available for children's self-chosen activities and the better access to the outside classroom area enables children to enter this area more frequently for their chosen activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Engage boys' greater interest and raise their aspirations for writing so they reach similar standards to the girls.
- Provide more challenge for the most able pupils so they achieve well.
- Help pupils to recognise how well they are doing in their work and to understand how they can further improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although pupils achieve well to reach average standards in Year 6, this good progress is not consistent across the school. In Key Stage 1, progress is now satisfactory but there has been some inadequate learning in the past. In the 2008 tests, pupils in Year 2 reached below average standards, which was an improvement on previous years. However, very few pupils reached the higher standard Level 3. Good progress is now made across Key Stage 2 so that standards in English, mathematics and science are all much higher than at the previous inspection. Standards in mathematics are stronger than in English across the school because this has been a focus of improvement. Standards in English are also broadly average but are not yet as high as those in mathematics or science. This is primarily because boys reach lower standards in writing than the girls throughout the school. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard Level 5 in Year 6 has increased but the proportion remains below the national average. There is no difference in the achievement of different ethnic groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong. They show respect for each other and are usually sensitive to each other's feelings. Incidents of bullying are very rare and behaviour is good. Pupils say they enjoy school and most attend regularly. Attitudes to their work are also good and this is an important factor in pupils' progress. They appreciate the range of cultures in their school and have a satisfactory awareness of the cultural diversity to be found in British society. They make a good contribution to the school community and respond well to raising money for world-wide charities and supporting local organisations. They are proud of the responsibilities they take on, such as peer mediators and school councillors. Pupils' understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles is good but they find it difficult to make healthy choices in what they eat. They are mature about dangers in our modern world and understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stages of their learning having developed adequate language, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures pupils make good progress overall from when they start in the Reception class to the end of Year 6. It is at its best in classes where teachers have good levels of experience and expertise. In all classes relationships are good and pupils behave well, wanting to do well. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' involvement and activities are usually effectively matched to the age and abilities in the class. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and encouraged so they are able to take a full part in lessons. Class sizes are often small and pupils receive very good levels of attention from the teacher and teaching assistant. Sometimes the pace of the lesson is a little slow and, although work is planned to build on what pupils have already learnt, there is not enough challenge for the more able pupils and they make less progress than their peers. Teachers are increasingly using ICT resources well to stimulate pupils' interest. Marking is effective in celebrating good work and effort but not always in identifying how the work could be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and is enhanced by a wide range of additional activities, visits and after-school clubs. Arts week is a particular success, and pupils are very proud of their large creatures made out of wire which they made with a visiting artist and which can be found around the school building. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal social and health education, and this has a positive impact on their understanding of the needs of others. However, the school has recognised that more opportunities to meet and work with a greater variety of cultures would further extend pupils' understanding of life outside their own community. ICT is increasingly used to support pupils' learning in other subjects and the natural links between subjects, especially with literacy, are developing satisfactorily. This is a current focus for school development so that activities are made more meaningful to pupils and further encourage their enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The levels of personal and pastoral care given to all pupils are very good and they feel able to talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. One parent expressed the feelings of many when they wrote, 'Teaching staff, classroom assistants, office and caretaking staff are all committed to the care and guidance of the children.' Pupils say they feel safe and know that all the staff will respond quickly and effectively if there are any concerns. Safeguarding procedures are all in place and rigorously monitored. Links with outside agencies provide good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school, with the support of the Education Welfare Office, is supporting the few pupils who do not attend sufficiently regularly and is successfully raising the levels of pupils' attendance. Good links with parents are forged by all staff. The Parent Partnership worker in particular builds links with families who are more difficult to reach and promotes good communication between the school and all families.

Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' progress are used to identify possible underachievement and to plan strategies to support pupils' better learning. Procedures to help pupils recognise how well they are doing and to understand how to improve are effective in some classes but are not yet consistently in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The monitoring of the school's work is comprehensive, well organised and thorough, with the result that there is a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. An accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is shared by all staff and governors, and leads to well-focused targets for development. The English and mathematics coordinators provide strong leadership for their subjects but the management of non-core subjects is receiving only brief attention whilst staff revise their curriculum plan. Governors hold the staff to account and provide good levels of support, especially in planning the future financial stability of the school. The staff are successful in promoting aspects of community cohesion through the inclusiveness of their approach to pupils and their positive links with outside agencies and local schools. One parent's comments were typical of many: 'A real strength is its community feel, involving families and community.'

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairway Primary School, Birmingham, B38 8XQ

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

- Fairway Primary has made lots of progress in the last three years. This is due to the strong leadership of your headteacher and the hard work of all the staff.
- You make good progress in your work and you reach standards that are expected by the time you are in Year 6.
- You behave well and get on with each other successfully. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You understand how to keep yourselves safe, and could make more positive choices about staying healthy and fit.
- The school is an exciting place to be. You clearly enjoy your lessons and often have lots of fun. You work hard and want to do well.
- The provision for children in the Reception class is good.
- You are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting. You have lots of additional things to do, including visits and clubs that are fun and extend your experiences.
- All the staff look after you very well so you feel safe and are happy.

Even though Fairway is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do better. We have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to do these things.

- Help boys to be more interested in their writing so they reach the same standards as the girls.
- Ensure that those pupils who find learning easy make the same good progress as the rest of you.
- Help you to get a good understanding of how well you are doing and to understand how to improve further.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions and making our visit to your school so pleasurable.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan Lead inspector