

Fairways Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114841
Local Authority	SOUTHEND-ON-SEA LA
Inspection number	311725
Inspection dates	20–21 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

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 on roll	
School	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Julie Cushion
Headteacher	Mr Lee Pinchback (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	The Fairway Leigh-on-sea Essex SS9 4QW
Telephone number	01702525693
Fax number	01702529360

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fairways Primary School is a larger than average school serving Leigh-on-Sea in Essex. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average, although the proportion with a statement of special education need is well above average. The school runs a 20 place resource base for pupils with speech and language difficulties and is a nominated 'lead school for inclusion' within the Local Authority. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, with few who have English as an additional language.

The School has Investors in People status, the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the International Award (at intermediate level), the National Association for Able Children in Education Challenge Award, and the National Information Technology Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Fairways Primary School is a good school. In the words of parents, it is 'a very happy school which really aids the pupils' learning', and 'Fairways is a totally inclusive school'. This is because of the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support and the attention paid to the personal development and well-being of each and every pupil from the time they start school to the time they leave. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are also outstanding and they genuinely reflect the school's core values of respect, responsibility and perseverance. The school can rightly claim that it is 'focused on learning'.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment broadly in line with national expectations and make satisfactory progress. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, they make good progress. In 2007 pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils reached above average standards. This is the result of good teaching, linked to the careful tracking of pupils' progress by teachers and senior leaders, and outstanding support. By taking steps to support pupils the school prevents long term underachievement through carefully planned interventions. 'My daughter showed great enthusiasm for reading, but was struggling. Measures were taken and now she is flying'. Enhanced by pupils' excellent attitudes, by their sense of responsibility, and by the close links with parents, this support ensures that pupils do make good progress. The whole school community rightly value the termly learning conferences between pupils, their parents and teachers. Partnerships with outside agencies and schools are highly effective. The good curriculum promotes real enjoyment. Everyone is enthused by the new thematic approach! Attendance is very good and the school works hard to ensure pupils attend regularly. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their questioning often skilfully promotes thinking. A strong feature of lessons is the careful deployment and very good support of teaching assistants. However, in lessons, although careful attention is paid to the needs of all learners, planning sometimes focuses too much on activities rather than on what different groups are learning, and pupils, especially more able pupils, are not always given the opportunity to make the best possible progress. The school is trialling approaches to marking and giving feedback to pupils but currently pupils do not always have enough information as to how to improve their work and make the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management are good, with leadership responsibilities shared throughout the staff team. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision and a real passion for improvement. They are very well supported by staff and governors, who share their passion. The school knows itself well, but although self evaluation is accurate, leaders are not monitoring provision with sufficient rigour, to ensure that work is always tailored to pupil's needs. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and children make a secure start to their education. Progress is sound for most children, although the school does not do enough to check children's progress and analyse its findings and make sure that provision is promoting good progress. In some lessons more able children are not provided with work that is sufficiently challenging. The curriculum meets statutory requirements effectively. The learning environment is appropriate and stimulates learning. Teaching assistants support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very effectively, thereby enhancing their learning. Interventions

by staff have been effective in supporting children's personal development. The school successfully fosters good partnership with parents and liaison with pre-school partners is well developed, enabling children to settle into routines quickly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Set up a monitoring programme so that leaders at all levels, including governors, regularly check the effectiveness of provision.
- Establish consistent procedures to let pupils know how to improve their work and the next steps in their learning in order to meet their personal targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Having made satisfactory progress in Foundation Stage, pupils enter Year 1 with attainment in line with national expectations. Standards at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated but rose in 2007 to become significantly higher than average in reading, writing and mathematics representing good progress for these pupils. However, the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was average. Standards at the end of Year 6 rose to become significantly above average in 2007, because of above average standards in mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and in 2007, made particularly good progress in mathematics and science. All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds are making good progress towards realistic, challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, with some pupils, particularly those in the resource base making very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school very much. Their attendance is good and their contribution to the life of the school is outstanding. They maintain excellent relationships with each other and with their teachers. Their behaviour is excellent. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem and are confident that adults in the school can help them solve any difficulties. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, enabling them to make a very positive contribution to the school and wider community. They are proud to take on extra responsibilities. All Year 6 pupils undertake jobs around the school. The school council makes thoughtful contributions to the running of the school. Pupils understand the importance of staying safe and having healthy lifestyles. The high priority the school places on valuing and developing each pupil as an individual means that confidence, independence and maturity are key features of the pupils' personal development. Pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of pupils' needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They work very effectively with teaching assistants, helping to ensure that most pupils make good progress. However, lessons do not always provide more able pupils with sufficiently challenging work to accelerate their rate of progress. The use of

skilful questioning and good subject knowledge help to ensure pupils are able to develop their thinking in a logical manner. Although many pupils know their targets in terms of the National Curriculum, marking does not consistently provide clear guidance about how to achieve them and how to know when they have succeeded. In addition, not all teachers place sufficient emphasis on the presentation of pupils' work. Classrooms are lively and stimulating, and pupils feel well supported by the 'prompts for learning' on display. The use of whiteboards, other resources and paired work ensure that pupils are increasingly learning in active and practical ways.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with a strong emphasis on the development of core skills in literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology. It has been modified successfully to provide a thematic approach to lessons. Regular 'themed weeks' motivate learning and provide stimulating first hand experiences which are enjoyed by pupils and staff and appreciated by parents. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' multicultural understanding, for example, the recent celebration of Chinese New Year was helped by a visiting dragon! The teaching of French and other languages, plus an extensive programme of after-school activities enriches learning, and pupils enjoy the regular residential and other visits. Learning in personal, social and health education is good, giving regular opportunities to share and develop the values of the school community. However, the curriculum is not monitored rigorously enough to always ensure that it provides sufficient challenge for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Procedures for supporting pupils' personal and academic development are outstanding, strongly underpinned by the school's core values. Parents almost universally praise this aspect of their children's care. Learning conferences provide an excellent forum for pupils to share their learning with parents/ carers and their teachers. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is exemplary. Regular analysis of pupils' progress provide valuable insight into learning and help ensure that support is well matched to pupils' needs.

Health and safety procedures and those for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are well established. Induction procedures are very effective in ensuring children settle easily. Well-organised transition links to secondary schools enable pupils to make wise decisions about their next move.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A key feature of the schools' vision is that of inclusion. This is strongly promoted by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors. Barriers to learning are overcome to enable all to engage fully in the learning process. Senior leaders have strong support from middle leaders, who have been empowered to take responsibility for their areas of responsibility. Performance management structures ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their accountability for pupils' progress. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and informed by all members of the school community. However, systems are not yet clear enough for all leaders

and governors to have their full impact on quickening the pace of school improvement. The school works well with other partners, including an external consultant to drive improvement. Senior leaders ensure that action taken is fine-tuned to meet the school's needs. Improvement planning however, does not always clearly identify how actions are to be monitored to gauge their effectiveness. Governance is good. The governing body are well informed through their own involvement with the school, and through the input of both teachers and the headteacher.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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?	1

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fairways Primary School, Leigh-on-Sea SS9 4QW

We very much enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for making us so welcome, and for talking to us and showing us your work. We were very impressed by the way you work so well together in lessons and play so well together. We were also very impressed by your understanding of feelings and by how well you know the school's code of respect, responsibility and perseverance. We know you thoroughly enjoy school and know how important it is to learn. Your learning conferences clearly help you think about your learning. You have lots of interesting things to do at school and all the staff really help you to do well, through their hard work and their care.

There are two things we have asked Mr Pinchback, the governors and the teachers to do, to help you to make even more progress.

- They need to know how well you are being taught and how well you are working so that all of you make the best possible progress.
- All teachers need to let you know how to improve your work and how to make the next steps in your learning.

We wish you every success in the future.

With best wishes

Heather Weston HMI