

Inspection of a good school: Fair Field Junior School

Watford Road, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8LU

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 March 2023

Outcome

Fair Field Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at Fair Field Junior School. Pupils know that they are valued and cared for by dedicated staff. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and are motivated by the vast range of wider opportunities on offer. Pupils respond well to the high standards their teachers have and take immense pride in their work. They relish the chance to develop their talents and interests as part of 'crews'. Many pupils attend school clubs.

Pupils talk about the positive 'energy' around school. Pupils take an active part in school life. They appreciate their views and ideas being listened to. Pupils take on leadership roles, from 'meeters and greeters' to being 'eco-warriors'. They benefit from trips to the theatre, taking part in local and county sports and dance competitions, meeting a local author and learning about famous artists.

Pupils understand equality and fairness. They respect and follow the school rules. Pupils can fully focus on their learning in class and play together well, with older pupils acting as 'buddies' to those in lower years. This helps younger pupils settle in quickly. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other. Bullying is therefore rare. Pupils know staff would help them if it did happen.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created an aspirational curriculum which ensures pupils gain the knowledge they need and in the right order. Leaders have carefully planned additional opportunities to broaden pupils' learning and provide pupils with experiences they may not otherwise access. Subject leaders also have very strong subject knowledge which they successfully share with staff. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Leaders skilfully help staff to adapt activities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and or/disabilities (SEND) or for pupils who have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders frequently check on the progress of these pupils. Teachers pick up

pupils' misconceptions quickly, especially in reading and mathematics. Consequently, pupils who need extra support catch up quickly and can work with independence.

Much of the curriculum is well embedded and implemented. However, a few foundation subjects have only recently been reviewed. Teachers are still getting used to these new updates. In these subjects, teachers still need to refine how best to teach new knowledge and check the curriculum has been learned.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers choose books from a range of authors and which deepen pupils' understanding of other parts of the curriculum. Pupils read often and enjoy talking about the many books they know. Pupils follow a systematic reading curriculum that ensures they can read fluently and with detailed understanding. Younger pupils benefit from targeted phonics support. Pupils that find reading tricky make quick progress. All pupils read books matched to their reading ability.

Pupils engage fully with learning in class and show high levels of self-control. They cooperate well. No learning time is wasted. Older pupils are excellent role models. Pupils play well together at break. Staff apply the behaviour policy consistently and all pupils are motivated to achieve 'diamond status' for their work. Pupils who need help to manage their feelings are well supported by the high-quality pastoral systems in place.

Leaders constantly seek opportunities for pupils to try new experiences. These include themed weeks, visits and trips, entering competitions, singing at the Wembley SSE Arena, drama, dance and being part of the '2041 Challenge' for climate change. Pupils support the community by looking after local woodland and develop awareness of other countries and cultures, including running the French café.

Staff are committed to the success of the school, yet appreciate that leaders also consider their well-being. Teachers value the time they are given to lead their subjects and plan together.

Governors and the trust provide clear strategic direction, including making effective links with the feeder infant school. Parents appreciate the smooth transition from the infants to juniors. Governors hold leaders to account effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Adults ensure pupils know how to stay safe. They teach pupils about online safety, how to manage peer pressure and staying safe on public transport or walking to school. Leaders also arrange for visits from the police and fire service. Pupils feel safe as they can talk to adults about any concerns, including using the mental health check-in stations in each class.

Leaders have robust systems for identifying and following up any concerns raised. Staff and governors have up-to-date safeguarding training. Leaders ensure all necessary checks on adults working with children are fulfilled.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently updated a few of the foundation subjects. As these few subjects are in the early stages of embedding, some pupils are not yet recalling the detailed knowledge leaders intend. Leaders need to continue to ensure teachers are clear on the specific knowledge they want pupils to know in these subjects. Teachers need to ensure that they then check pupils have secured this detailed knowledge before moving on to new learning, and leaders need to monitor that this happens.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	141898
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10255209
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nicola Mullett
Headteacher	Alice Aharon
Website	www.fairfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Poppy Academy Trust, which includes the feeder infant school which the executive headteacher also oversees.
- The school also has a head of school who manages the school on a daily basis.
- Currently, the school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, the inclusion manager, a range of subject leaders and teachers.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For the deep dives, the lead inspector spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff.

- The lead inspector met representatives from the local governing body and the trust. The lead inspector also spoke to the school improvement adviser.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body and trust, local authority adviser visit reports and the school development plan.
- The lead inspector looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector spoke with leaders about the systems and processes to support safeguarding, and the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The lead inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the 92 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 19 staff survey responses. There were 50 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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