

Fair Field Junior School

Watford Road, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 8LU

Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The acting executive headteacher and acting head of school provide strong leadership and successfully promote pupils' learning. They ensure that all pupils receive a good education.
- Leaders have secured a broad and rich curriculum that meets pupils' academic, social and emotional needs. Pupils are kind and very supportive of each other.
- Governors have provided appropriate support and challenge. They have a breadth of experience which they bring to their work with the school.
- Parents are unanimous in their praise of the school. They value highly the support and care that staff provide for their children.
- Pupils' achievement across the curriculum is good and improving. Pupils make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The leadership's unwavering commitment to improving standards in teaching and learning has ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- The teaching of writing is very effective. Pupils gain a strong understanding of how to construct writing for a range of purposes and audiences. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing throughout the curriculum.
- The teaching of science is a strength of the school. Pupils develop and apply scientific skills such as observation and analysis. Pupils are keen to investigate the world around them.
- The school ensures that all pupils are safe. Pupils are aware of internet safety and know how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum helps pupils to develop robust strategies to ensure their physical safety and emotional well-being.
- Pupils' behaviour and relationships are outstanding. Their conduct both within class and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are highly attentive in class and respond with enthusiasm to tasks and activities.
- The school provides a rich programme of trips and activities to extend pupils' understanding of the topics they study. For example, pupils visit Hatfield House to support their study of the Tudors.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently good progress in every area of the curriculum. Although the pupil premium funding is used effectively, monitoring and tracking of disadvantaged pupils' progress are not consistently effective.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not consistently making good progress in every area of the curriculum.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - rigorously evaluating the impact of intervention and support methods so that appropriate action is taken to ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve as well as they can in subjects across the curriculum
 - monitoring and tracking the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities more regularly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, staff, governors and parents work closely together to ensure that pupils receive a good-quality education. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's high-quality care and support for their children.
- Fair Field Junior School is an inclusive school. Leaders and staff have successfully created a school culture whereby pupils play and work together harmoniously. Leaders' high expectations have enabled pupils to collaborate and support each other's learning regardless of their different starting points.
- Leaders monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning regularly and effectively. Leaders provide highly effective support to teachers to ensure consistently high-quality teaching. Leaders link training and support to whole-school priorities to accelerate improvement. For example, leaders identified writing as an area of development, resulting in a series of staff training workshops. Consequently, overall pupils' progress in writing has improved.
- English and mathematics leads monitor the progress of pupils in their respective subjects regularly. They identify gaps in understanding, and support staff through training and planning. For example, the mathematics lead identified the difficulties that pupils faced with mathematical reasoning and introduced pertinent strategies. As a result, overall pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics has improved.
- Leadership of science is strong. Pupils develop scientific skills through conducting investigations. For example, Year 3 pupils were observed experimenting with foil figures and torches to deduce how light and distance affected the shape of shadows.
- Leadership of personal, social, health and economic education is robust. Pupils develop effective skills of reflection and evaluation regarding their own lives and the world around them. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class reflected with maturity upon people who inspired them and applied their attributes to their own lives.
- Both pupils and staff gain from the effective use of the additional funding for primary school sports. Pupils participate in a wide range of sports such as tennis, football and gymnastics. Staff learn new skills and techniques to inform their teaching of physical education. Pupils are aware of the importance of physical exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Key messages relating to exercise and nutrition are embedded in many areas of the curriculum such as science. Pupils participate with great enthusiasm in a weekly mile walk around the school playing field.
- The curriculum is wide ranging and enriching. Pupils study a breadth of topics such as the Tudors and the Egyptians. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other curricular areas. For example, in a Year 4 class they read and wrote about the science behind mummification. Activities beyond the classroom serve to enrich the curriculum further. For example, pupils visited the British Museum to see the Egyptian tombs that they had been studying.
- Leaders constantly strive to improve the experiences that pupils have at the school. Recognising the difficulty that some pupils have with accessing sport, leaders devised a school sports crew who were tasked with involving their peers in sports activities. As a

result, more pupils registered their enthusiasm for school sports day.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils learn about world religions such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism. They gain a clear understanding through the curriculum of life in other countries and cultures. For example, Year 4 pupils were able to articulate with sophistication the difficulties of life in South Africa drawn from reading the novel, 'Journey to Jo'burg'. The annual 'heritage week' enables pupils to explore different identities and reflect on their own experiences.
- Pupils' understanding of British values is strong. Pupils have a clear understanding of the importance of democracy, tolerance and free speech. The school council members are vocal in their defence of freedom and the right to voice their opinions about the school. Pupils visit the House of Commons once a year to experience, at first hand, the British model of democracy.
- School leaders accurately evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development. They are acutely aware of the importance of raising standards for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. Although additional pupil premium funding is spent effectively, leaders do not consistently monitor and review the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils across the curriculum. As a consequence, leaders do not consistently revise and adapt teaching and learning approaches to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils nationally in all areas of the curriculum.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in identifying and addressing the specific barriers to learning that pupils experience. The funding is used effectively and is evaluated well. Pupils receive excellent social and emotional support enabling them to access the curriculum. Teaching assistants are effective in enabling pupils to overcome barriers to learning. Leaders' understanding of the needs of each pupil informs the highly tailored programme of pastoral support. However, leaders have not ensured a consistently effective programme of support for pupils to make progress across the curriculum in line with other pupils nationally.

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They are committed to improving standards.
- The governing body draws on the skills of individual governors to ensure that expertise is used effectively. For example, governors' understanding and oversight of the school budget is strong.
- Governors visit the school regularly to gain a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and requirements. Their work is closely linked to the school improvement priorities. However, governors' understanding of the additional needs of disadvantaged pupils is not consistently strong.
- Governors' oversight of the school's safeguarding processes is robust. For example, regular auditing of the single central record is undertaken to ensure that all pupils are safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, governors and staff receive regular training in safeguarding. Consequently, staff know how to identify pupils at risk and how to refer. All staff receive timely updates.
- Safeguarding leads are tenacious in ensuring that vulnerable pupils are provided with the best support. The school's referral system and associated documentation demonstrate that leaders respond swiftly and appropriately to any concerns.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is frequently reviewed to ensure that all pupils receive the most effective support.
- The single central record meets all statutory requirements. It is well kept and frequently updated. Checks on the suitability of staff, governors and volunteers are rigorous.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online through highly effective guidance. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils know how to behave when on the internet so as not to place themselves in danger. Staff have also provided parents with detailed advice about how to ensure their children's safety when online at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils are eager learners. Inspectors observed pupils in a range of lessons and their enthusiasm for learning was evident. This is due to the consistently high expectations of pupils and the well-designed, exciting lessons.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. Having identified writing as an area for development, staff have undergone extensive training to ensure that they develop pupils' understanding of how language works within texts. As a consequence, pupils' progress has improved. Pupils were observed in a Year 6 class exploring the effect of language in writing about the lives of working children in Victorian Britain. The pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for writing and sophistication in their understanding of the impact of language features.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are extremely positive. Staff address the barriers to learning for most pupils by tailoring activities and tasks to the needs of pupils.
- Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning. They enjoy the challenge of tasks and respond robustly to teacher guidance. For example, Year 4 pupils were observed conducting a traffic survey in front of the school. The enthusiasm and focus of all pupils with different starting points in collating data through tally charts were clear. As a result, pupils were able to explain well what they were learning and how they were going to apply it in their mathematics lessons.
- Staff provide appropriate and frequent guidance to pupils to enable them to make progress. Pupils have also developed effective self-evaluation approaches. For example, pupils reflect on their progress in mathematics regularly, enabling teachers to tailor their lessons to their individual needs.

- Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively. Teaching assistants are well trained and provide effective support to pupils through skilful questioning. For example, through discreet guidance in a Year 3 class on volcanoes, pupils were able to label and explain the different sections of a volcano.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils are able to read well and discuss what they have read with maturity and understanding. Pupils are able to explain the impact of language on the ideas that the writer is trying to convey. For example, pupils in a Year 4 class were observed discussing the themes of oppression and poverty in 'Journey to Jo'burg' with perception and clarity. Pupils also told the inspector how much they loved reading. The well-stocked library is used regularly by all pupils.
- Having identified mathematical reasoning as an area for development, staff have received additional training and planning support. As a result, the teaching of mathematical reasoning has improved and pupils regularly think about the methodology they have used in their calculations.
- Teachers develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding well through cross-curricular topics such as the Tudors and the Egyptians. Pupils develop their knowledge of history, geography, reading and writing while also building their skills of analysis and reasoning.
- Pupils study French. Staff ensure that the study of foreign languages is exciting and purposeful. For example, pupils use their French skills to purchase items in a French café.
- Teachers provide a range of homework tasks that build on topics studied in class. Pupils develop independent learning approaches through homework tasks that help to prepare them for the next stage of learning.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the curriculum. They are given opportunities to extend their understanding, skills and knowledge through extension tasks. For example, the computing curriculum enables pupils to extend their coding knowledge and skills very effectively.
- Additional support for disadvantaged pupils is effective in supporting them to access the curriculum. Staff strengthen their attitudes towards learning well. Support is tailored and adapted dependent on the needs of the individual pupil. However, the effectiveness of additional support to accelerate pupils' progress across the curriculum is inconsistent. Staff do not consistently use assessment to plan how to accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils in some areas of the curriculum.
- Additional support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly effective in promoting their well-being and meeting their emotional and social needs. However, the support of their academic progress is not always effective. At times, staff do not use assessment well to inform pupils' next steps in some areas of the curriculum.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.

- Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. They are kind, welcoming and empathetic to the needs of others. The school's caring, pastoral approach has ensured that pupils have developed these critical behaviours.
- The teaching of personal, social, health and economic education is a strength of the school. Pupils develop clear understanding about the impact of their behaviour and the world around them. For example, Year 3 pupils were observed evaluating the changes they have experienced in their short lives since birth. Many pupils spoke articulately about the ways in which they responded to difficult situations.
- Attitudes to learning are exceptionally strong. In all lessons observed, pupils were motivated, engaged and focused. Pupils support each other with their learning and collaborate well.
- Pupils' generosity to those less fortunate than themselves is impressive. They select charities and fundraise to support them. For example, pupils worked cooperatively to raise funds for the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.
- Pupils are highly inclusive of one another. Pupils with different social and emotional needs are supported by their peers to enable them to participate fully in the life of the school.
- Pupils recognise that the school keeps them safe. The school's strong focus on e-safety ensures that pupils have both knowledge and strategies to remain safe online.
- Pupils develop a robust understanding of the importance and role of democracy and freedom of speech through election to the school council. Pupils express the importance of representing their classmates and their role in improving the school. To raise the profile of democracy in modern Britain, pupils pay an annual visit to the House of Commons in London.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents expressed their overwhelming satisfaction with the behaviour of pupils in the school. They spoke to inspectors about the ways in which the school guided pupils to develop positive behaviour and to be friendly towards each other. Parents also spoke unanimously of the effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.
- Pupils follow school rules very well. In the classroom, they move between activities well. Pupils understand the rules of the classroom and respect the guidance of staff. Staff rarely need to correct behaviour.
- Behaviour outside of lessons is exemplary. Pupils play well together and share activities and games with genuine enjoyment.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. School strategies have been highly effective in promoting attendance and highlighting the link between attendance and achievement.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have well-developed reading skills and pupils' current progress is good. Most pupils in all year groups make good progress. The proportion of pupils that make rapid

progress has increased since 2016. Reading has a high profile at the school with daily reading set as homework. Attainment in reading for key stage 2 pupils was in line with the national figure in 2015 but decreased to below average in 2016.

- Pupils' books demonstrate a high level of pride in their work as the presentation is very good. Handwriting is generally very neat. Pupils' progress in writing has improved and most pupils make good progress. Pupils' understanding of the impact of specific words and sentence types on their writing is strong. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to write throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved and most pupils make good progress. Staff identified mathematical reasoning as an area for development and pupils demonstrate improved understanding of the methods they employ for calculation. Attainment in mathematics was in line with the national figure in 2015 and 2016.
- Pupils make very good progress in their social and emotional development. They are enthusiastic learners. Pupils develop critical strategies to strengthen their resilience and understanding of their behaviour and emotions. As a consequence, pupils are able to reflect upon their learning.
- Pupils develop very good scientific skills such as observation and estimation. Pupils explore scientific concepts using their reading, writing and mathematical skills well. For example, work in Year 5 pupils' books demonstrated written analysis about the sun at different times of the year using data. All pupils' attainment in science is in line with the national figure.
- The most able pupils make good progress across the curriculum. For example, the most able pupils in physical education extend their skills through coaching younger pupils. The school's enhanced focus on developing mathematical reasoning has enabled the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, to make accelerated progress in mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities did not make progress in line with other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. However, in 2015, pupils were in line with the national figure in all three areas of the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment were below the national average in 2016. The attainment of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, was below the national average in 2016. Additionally, disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing was below the national average in 2016. However, in 2015, disadvantaged pupils made above-average progress in reading and writing and attained above the national average in mathematics in 2015.

School details

Unique reference number	141898
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10031416

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	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Steve Bowbrick
Acting executive headteacher	Alice Aharon
Acting head of school	Roshnia Devlia
Telephone number	01923 856341
Website	www.fairfield.herts.sch.uk
Email address	head@fairfield.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school. It converted to an independent academy in 2015.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans is in line with the national average.

- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms, some with the interim acting executive headteacher and acting head of school, to observe learning and to talk to pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met formally with the interim acting executive headteacher, acting head of school and other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator.
- Meetings were held with five governors, 14 pupils, the school council, Hertfordshire local authority school improvement partner and parents.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed reading with a range of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work across the curriculum and across all year groups to determine the accuracy of assessment and the sustainability of pupils' progress.
- The lead inspector checked the school's documentation regarding the school's approach and systems for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching. She also considered the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plans.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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