

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Fairfield First School

Stourbridge Road, Fairfield, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 9LZ

Inspection date:

20 May 2025

Outcome

Fairfield First School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This welcoming village school is at the heart of the community. Pupils understand the school's values of ambition, resilience, curiosity and compassion. They show these values through their respectful behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. This contributes to the school's calm, purposeful ethos. Pupils are happy, safe and valued.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils play their part in this. They are rarely absent. They enjoy learning new knowledge. They take pride in their work. They achieve well.

Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles, such as play leaders. The school rotates roles so that all pupils experience positions of responsibility. Pupils contribute to local community events, such as church services and tree planting. They are proud of their plans to celebrate the school's 150th anniversary. This culture of collective responsibility helps to prepare pupils for life beyond school.

Pupils love the school's grounds and woodlands. They especially enjoy the outdoor learning curriculum. This helps pupils to learn about the environment and respect the natural world. Activities build their strength of character. Extra-curricular clubs enable pupils to extend their interests and talents. These include cricket, gardening, street dancing and cooking.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn. In most subjects, this ensures progression from early years through to Year

4. The school's approach to teaching early reading and early mathematics is systematic and effective. Reception children are keen to explain that subitising helps them to recognise quantity without counting every single number. This provides a firm platform for Year 1 mathematics work and supports the school's focus on mathematical fluency.

The early years is an exciting and vibrant place to learn. As soon as children join, stories, songs and rhymes are the basis for learning. This helps children to grow in confidence and develop early language and communication skills. In outdoor learning activities, they proudly identify leaf names and shapes, such as oak and horse chestnut. Staff provide creative activities to support children's motor development and mark making. This ensures that children learn basic skills, such as holding a pencil correctly. This prepares them well for Year 1.

Staff deliver the phonics programme to a consistently high standard. They use checks on pupils' learning effectively. Pupils' reading books match the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils achieve very well in the Year 1 phonics check. The school identifies any pupils who need help with reading fluency and comprehension. They receive timely and effective support. This helps pupils to be confident, fluent readers by the time they leave Year 4.

Staff skilfully engage pupils' interests. For example, pupils are proud of their 3D sculptures of the school's pond area. They draw on their knowledge of art techniques and artists, such as Barbara Hepworth and Madelen Odundo, as they discuss their own designs. These well-planned opportunities support pupils' love of learning and help them to build their knowledge in the way that the curriculum intends.

At the beginning of this academic year, the school introduced new curriculum programmes in a small number of foundation subjects. This is helping staff to focus more on building important subject-specific knowledge and skills from Year 1 to Year 4. The curriculum expectations for early years are not always included. This means that, in some subjects, the school has not considered carefully what is learned in early years. As a result, time is lost repeating previous learning when children enter key stage 1.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) quickly. Staff value the support and training from experts such as the speech and language team. The school ensures that pupils have resources, such as symbols and pictures, to support their learning. Individual plans and support ensure that pupils access the same curriculum as their classmates. Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

The school's values are the bedrock of the personal development programme. Pupils understand democracy. They know that they have a voice and can approach staff with their ideas for actions. Pupils show a strong understanding of the commonalities across world religions. For example, they talk about shared beliefs, such as concern for the homeless and lonely. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They describe respect and kindness as key ingredients to good friendships.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They effectively support the work of the school. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the consideration given to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that the curriculum links to what pupils learn in the early years. This means that sometimes staff are not fully aware of what pupils already know when they enter key stage 1. Pupils repeat previous learning or layer new learning where foundational knowledge is not secure. The school should ensure that the curriculum includes the knowledge and skills that children develop in early years so that expectations are suitably high in key stage 1 across all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked-after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	116675
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10378220
Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynn Ball
Headteacher	Scott Smith
Website	www.fairfield.worcs.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with the chair of the governing body and three other governors.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors observed a selection of pupils reading to members of staff. Other pupils were heard read their own work during lessons.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Inspectors checked records of attendance and behaviour. They also observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and lunchtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. In addition, they met with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Inspectors met with pupils and staff to gather the views of the school. They also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff.

Inspection team

Marilyn Mottram, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Janet Tibbits

Ofsted Inspector

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