

Fairways Primary School

The Fairway, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 4QW

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make a good start to their school careers in the Reception classes.
- Pupils make good progress in all key stages because teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding.
- Attainment is rising in all subjects as a result.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including pupils in the high-quality speech and language base, thrive thanks to good, supportive relationships between pupils and with adults.
- Pupils are well behaved. They say they feel safe, and their parents and carers agree.
- Attendance is above average.
- The school is led and managed well, and the roles played by teachers in charge of subject areas are developing to ensure further improvement.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They provide a good level of support while continually checking its performance.
- Pupils benefit from a good range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Lesson activities are not always sufficiently demanding, or include enough tasks for pupils to do on their own, to encourage pupils to reach the highest levels in their work.
- The way teachers check and mark pupils' work is good, but does not always link closely to pupils' targets by showing them how to reach the next steps in their learning.
- Also, staff do not use the results of these checks well enough to fine-tune pupils' targets and thereby ensure that progress rates continue to rise quickly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 24 lessons taught by 18 teachers.
- They held meetings with governors, staff, a parent and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 136 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection, and also spoke to parents and carers in the playground.
- They observed the school’s work and looked at the school improvement plan, assessment data, monitoring and self-evaluation procedures, a range of policies, and arrangements for safeguarding. They looked at pupils’ books in lessons and in a joint work scrutiny with senior staff.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector
Sandra Teacher	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who speak English as an additional language are below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school contains a specially resourced provision for special educational needs. This 15-place speech and language resource base caters for pupils with language disorders or significant language delay.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional income provided to the school (the pupil premium) is below the national average.
- A nursery and pre-school share the school site, as well as an after-school club. These facilities are not managed by the school's governing body, and were not included in the inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
 - all lessons match the best by having a high level of challenge, increased opportunities for independent work and a very close match of work to abilities
 - assessment and marking consistently indicate the next steps in pupils' learning, and all comments are closely linked to pupils' targets
 - classroom displays always exemplify to pupils what the best possible work looks like.
- Improve the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation procedures, by ensuring that all staff are trained in the use and analysis of data to set appropriate targets to further improve pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children achieve well in the Reception class. They enter the school with the knowledge and skills expected for their age and strong links with playgroups help to ensure a good start, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication and language. Any special educational needs children may have are identified early.
- Good progress continues into Key Stage 1, supported by effective preliminary meetings between Reception and Key Stage 1 staff. Increasingly rigorous monitoring is producing an upward trend in results, especially in reading. A wide range of additional strategies, such as spelling groups, detailed work on problem solving and one-to-one adult support, are leading to rising standards in writing and mathematics.
- Key Stage 2 results in 2012 were better than in 2011 in all areas. Forward projections for 2013 and beyond confirm this trend. Pupils are progressing well in English and mathematics.
- Literacy work across different subjects enhances pupils' reading and writing skills. For example, a Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson emphasised the right language to resolve conflicts. Good use of information and communication technology (ICT) is helping to develop pupils' mathematical skills through accessible software.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, make progress similar to their peers. Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs sometimes make even better progress, a factor which contributes to the school's popularity with parents and carers. All these pupils benefit from support that is closely adapted to their individual needs.
- The excellent speech and language resource base is well integrated so the pupils concerned derive full benefit from their time at the school. Experienced, knowledgeable leaders work closely with the local authority to ensure pupils gain maximum support from outside professionals such as therapists where appropriate. Planned learning activities are closely tailored to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils read confidently at their expected age levels or better, and build these skills well throughout the school due to good word recognition and support and a strong emphasis on reinforcing the sounds that letters make (phonics). The range of reading materials is being increased to encourage further progress. Initiatives like specific writing books and regular guided reading work are also developing reading and writing skills.
- Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers' expectations are clear. However, not all lessons match the very best ones by having a high level of challenge with plentiful opportunities for independent work.

The quality of teaching is good

- The very large majority of parents and carers who replied to Parent View feel their children are taught well. Pupils agree. Teaching observed during the inspection was typically good and sometimes outstanding.
- In a very few cases observed, teaching required improvement because the lesson was

dominated by the teacher and activities were not closely timed, and this limited the opportunities for pupils to work on their own. In the best lessons, brisk pace, constant challenge and high expectations were the norm.

- Teachers display good subject knowledge, question effectively and use ICT well to advance pupils' skills, as seen in an outstanding Year 3 ICT lesson where these aspects led to high-quality work. Two advanced skills teachers in the school are helping to develop best practice among staff.
- Planning is thorough and takes into account the needs of all groups of learners. In a very few classes, the match of work to pupils' ability is too general to take attainment to the very highest levels, and wall displays of pupils' work do not encourage pupils to aim high in their work.
- Teaching assistants work well with staff to develop learning. High ratios of support staff, including in the speech and language base, ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are met well.
- Good staff-pupil relationships ensure that everyone works productively together in the classroom. Opportunities for pupils to take a lead in lessons are increasing but are occasionally missed when activities or resources do not fully engage pupils and they become passive learners.
- Assessment and marking procedures are good, and have improved following training for all the staff.
- Pupils have target sheets, but the next steps in learning are not always closely linked to them. The school enables pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers, but they are not always expected to respond to teachers' marking by correcting errors to ensure quicker progress. In an outstanding Year 4 art lesson, pupils were able to make these corrections on the spot and continually refine their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are well motivated because they understand the importance of learning. Interviews with the school council showed how well the school emphasises the importance of working together in a productive way.
 - Behaviour in and out of lessons is typified by productive relationships between pupils and with adults. Older pupils support younger ones in assemblies and on the playground as prefects.
 - Good behaviour is expected across the school in line with its core values of respect, responsibility and perseverance. Personal and social development is given a high priority from the moment children enter the school. Pupils are polite and respectful school ambassadors, and were seen serving as tour guides for new parents and carers during the inspection.
 - The behaviour of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, particularly in the speech and language base, improves quickly in this safe, secure environment from a variety of potentially challenging starting points. Support staff work closely with pupils to put them at their ease and instil confidence.
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- Pupils say they feel safe and parents and carers agree. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy because there is always an adult to whom they can turn.
- The school is working closely with the local authority to develop more formal systems to record behavioural incidents and sanctions, but these rigorous new systems are at a relatively early stage of development.
- Incidents of racism and bullying of any kind are rare, and pupils say that when they do occur, they are quickly dealt with. Pupils have a good awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying via the internet and name calling.
- The school works constantly to ensure that there is no discrimination of any kind. For example, pupils in Year 3 are delighted to have the opportunity to develop skills in sign language to help others.
- Attendance rates are high and show an upward trend thanks to concerted school efforts in this direction. Pupils are punctual to school and lessons because they enjoy learning. Exclusions are rare.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders have secured good improvements in teaching and learning. The headteacher is creating a school where everyone strives towards their personal best and focuses on improvement. Staff and governors share this vision.
 - Staff know they are accountable for pupils' progress as part of their performance management, and that performance is linked closely to salary progression. Middle managers have a leading role in regularly reviewing progress to quickly eliminate possible underachievement or gaps between groups of pupils.
 - The school is working effectively to refine its formal recording strategies, but staff are not yet fully trained in using progress data to set precise individual pupil targets to drive up standards at an ever-increasing rate.
 - Good links across subjects are increasingly supporting learning, including better use of ICT. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils wrote about what it felt like to be a soldier in the Crimean War. A Year 3 design and technology lesson involved mathematics in designing an iron man. Pupils have good opportunities to expand their sense of awe and wonder, and are now being asked to identify how their own experiences could enrich learning.
 - Pupils have strong social skills and a clear idea of right and wrong. The school has well-developed links with local faith groups. It has identified cultural enrichment as an area for development, and is reviewing how its diverse community can help to expand pupils' horizons.
 - Safeguarding meets all current requirements. Policies and practices are regularly reviewed and staff fully trained.
 - The school enjoys close links with the local authority, despite its 'light touch' approach to supporting this good school. The school has good capacity for further improvement because self-
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evaluation is accurate, priorities are accurately identified and governance is good.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- has a clear understanding of pupil premium funding, and uses it effectively to give all pupils equal opportunities to thrive in their learning and personal development
 - supports the school through visits and training received, but also readily challenges the school so improvement continues
 - applies the new performance management procedures effectively to reinforce the idea of accountability and the need for high standards
 - brings educational expertise to its work and is now looking to reinforce its members' good financial skills.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114841
Local authority	Southend-on-Sea
Inspection number	403247

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 of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenn Moore
Headteacher	Lee Pinchback
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Fax number	01702 529360
Email address	headteacher@fairways.southend.sch.uk

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