

Inspection of Fairfields Primary School

Apollo Avenue, Fairfields, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK11 4BA

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this vibrant school where there is a strong focus on community. They are enthusiastic about their learning in a wide range of subjects. They feel encouraged by their teachers to be curious and ask questions.

As part of the 'Fairfields Childhood Pledge', pupils enjoy a very wide range of memorable experiences that support them to become confident and rounded citizens. This work is particularly effective in early years, where children work with impressive focus and independence.

Pupils behave exceptionally well, both in lessons and at breaktimes. There is a highly inclusive ethos in which pupils understand and celebrate their differences. They demonstrate this in their thoughtful behaviour towards one another. Bullying or any form of unkindness is very uncommon and dealt with effectively. Citing the school's 'creed', one pupil told us, 'We respect each other regardless of gender, race or background.'

Leaders are not consistent in referring safeguarding concerns to other agencies when they should. Sometimes, these concerns are serious. This has left some pupils at risk of harm. Nevertheless, pupils feel safe at school. They are knowledgeable about the school's safeguarding systems, including whom to go to if they have a problem.

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

Leaders' actions are driven by their vision to be the 'beating heart of the community'. They have been successful in engaging parents and carers, who fully support the school and recognise its significant strengths. One parent summed up this positive feeling when responding to Ofsted's online survey: 'The staff at Fairfields are just amazing! They show so much love, care and support to the children and go above and beyond every day!'

Leaders are ambitious about what all pupils can achieve. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are well supported to meet these high expectations. Leaders have thought in precise detail about what pupils should learn in each year group and subject. As the school has grown in size, they have developed the curriculum and teachers' expertise in delivering it. The impact of this work can be seen in all year groups, but is clearest in early years. Staff in early years make sure that children can talk about and apply their learning to different situations. However, some pupils in other year groups do not understand very clearly how different parts of their learning link together.

Leaders have made reading a priority in the school. Staff are trained effectively to deliver the school's chosen phonics programme. The books that pupils are given to practise their reading are carefully matched with the sounds they have learned in lessons. Children learn to read quickly as soon as they join the school in Reception,

where the teaching of reading is exceptional. Teachers in early years adapt their teaching of reading precisely to make sure that each child has the best chance of success. As pupils progress through the school, they are introduced to wide-ranging and engaging stories, non-fiction texts and poems, which inspires them to develop their love of reading. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they have read in class and independently.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are proud of their work, and leaders take every opportunity to celebrate their efforts and achievements. For example, pupils are keen to demonstrate effective learning behaviours or show how polite and helpful they can be. In early years, children demonstrate consistently excellent behaviour: there are well-embedded routines that underpin their learning.

Pupils benefit from an extremely broad range of clubs that cover everything from gardening and yoga, to dance and basketball. Leaders have ensured that there is good uptake of these activities, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to apply for leadership roles. For example, pupil leaders talk about working alongside the school's senior leadership team on the school's aim to become carbon neutral.

Staff feel well supported by a caring leadership team. They are able to go to leaders with problems because they know that they will be listened to without fear of judgement. There is a highly positive culture among staff. They are proud to be part of the school community.

Governors and trustees have developed systems to monitor and support the school. They work closely with leaders and receive regular information about the school's performance. However, their oversight of safeguarding has not been effective. Issues have not been identified in a timely fashion or challenged robustly enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Pupils at this school feel safe and talk to adults if they have concerns. As part of their personal, social and health education programme, pupils learn about healthy relationships and how to stay safe when online. Checks on new staff are completed appropriately. Regular training for staff means that they are knowledgeable about how to identify concerns and make referrals. However, these are not followed up consistently by leaders. In particular, there are too many occasions where leaders have not passed on concerns, sometimes serious ones, to other agencies involved in keeping children safe. Governors and trustees have not been quick enough or sufficiently tenacious in identifying these issues. Although governors and trustees have raised concerns, they have not ensured that these have been addressed effectively enough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding is not effective. Leaders have not been consistent in making referrals to external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Leaders at trust, local governance and school level have not identified these issues quickly enough or provided robust challenge. Leaders must ensure that concerns about children are referred to external agencies to enable a multi-agency approach to supporting children.
- Some pupils form misconceptions about how different ideas in the curriculum are connected. They do not see the links between the different parts of what they are learning. Leaders should continue to refine curriculum plans and train teachers in how to deliver these effectively. This will ensure that pupils' understanding of each subject is fully coherent, raising pupils' achievement further.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	143766
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10212127
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	414
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marilyn Hubbard
Headteacher	Matthew Shotton
Website	www.fairfieldsprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a new academy free school established on 1 September 2017.
- The school has a Nursery provision that admits children from the age of two.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

- Ofsted has not previously inspected Fairfields Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with senior staff, including the executive headteacher, the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team and those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors met with members of the local governing body, trustees and executive school leaders from the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors checked the school's single central record, scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and talked to teachers, pupils, leaders, governors and representatives of the trust about their role in keeping children safe.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, pupils and staff that were shared in response to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

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