

Inspection of Fairfield Infant and Nursery School

Bench Road, Fairfield, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 7PQ

Inspection dates:	25 and 26 March 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. They are happy and feel safe. Pupils, staff and parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. This is because the school really cares about its pupils and relationships are strong. Pupils know that staff will listen and help them if they have concerns.

Pastoral support for pupils is effective. The school is relentless in identifying and removing barriers to learning. The support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is well considered.

The school provides a calm and orderly environment for pupils. Staff skilfully manage challenging behaviour. Most pupils behave well.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve in some subjects. Teachers respond swiftly to the needs of pupils, for example by providing sensory breaks to ensure that learning is not disrupted. Other pupils benefit from the adaptations to learning in class.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities to develop their character. For example, they delight in being chosen as a playground leader or a 'VIP' leader. They are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities. Time spent learning in the outdoors develops pupils' resilience and encourages risk-taking.

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

In response to disappointing outcomes in the phonics screening check, the school has changed its approach. A new scheme has been implemented, and some staff have accessed appropriate training. Children begin learning to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. The school ensures that pupils have sufficient practice when they learn new sounds so they can apply these to their reading. However, at times, these sounds are not modelled accurately. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Staff check how well pupils are progressing through the scheme. If pupils fall behind, staff ensure they are supported to catch up and become fluent readers.

In early years, staff focus on developing language. They encourage children to talk in full sentences and model how this should be done. Children listen intently and copy staff. Consequently, they develop their own communication skills. This continues through the school, where pupils reflect on key vocabulary and include relevant words in their explanations.

Teachers swiftly identify pupils' needs. They adapt learning well, for example through adult support and practical activities. The school checks how well pupils with SEND are learning the intended curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum. Some subjects have been

reviewed effectively. In these subjects, pupils articulate their learning and remember the core knowledge. They apply what they have learned. This is because the key knowledge is explicit. In a few subjects, there is too much to cover. This means learning sequences are not well thought out. Consequently, pupils do not remember the key learning over time.

In early years, staff carefully check how well children are learning. They identify any gaps in learning and ensure that the children swiftly receive additional support. These checks also happen in some subjects in key stage 1, for example science. In these subjects, pupils recall what they have learned before. Teachers continue to check pupils' understanding carefully and identify any gaps in their learning. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. This means that, sometimes, teachers do not always have the information needed to identify and address specific gaps in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils do not always learn as well as they could.

Pupils engage in practical learning experiences which excite them. There is an animated buzz across the school. Pupils attend well. The school's expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. Pupils behave well in class. Staff ensure that pupils are supported effectively when they struggle to manage their own behaviour. Staff have been trained to support pupils with complex behaviour needs effectively.

The provision for pupils' personal development is considered carefully. Pupils learn about physical health and well-being. They learn about turn-taking and the importance of listening to others. The school ensures that pupils understand important aspects of life in modern Britain. Respect and tolerance are promoted explicitly through the school's motto: 'learning for life'. Pupils understand equality and inclusion. They know about different faiths and beliefs.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Appropriate processes are in place to check the school's effectiveness. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel leaders are considerate of their well-being and workload. They value the training that they have had.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all staff have sufficient expertise in teaching phonics. As a result, there is some inconsistency in how well the early reading curriculum is delivered. This means some pupils do not make as much progress as they could with reading. The school should ensure that all staff receive the support they need to teach phonics effectively so all pupils become fluent and confident readers.

- Some foundation subjects do not clearly set out what pupils need to know and remember. Where this is the case, pupils do not remember their learning over time as well as they could. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, the key knowledge pupils need to learn and remember is identified clearly to allow for a more consistent delivery of the curriculum across all subjects. This will enable pupils to know and remember more across all areas of the curriculum.
- The school does not check closely enough how well pupils are learning the curriculum. In some subjects, there is little assessment of what pupils do and do not know. As a result, pupils do not always have a secure understanding of the important curriculum content they need to remember. The school must ensure that any gaps in pupils' learning are identified and resolved swiftly so pupils learn the important knowledge they need.

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	112699
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10324065
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Ambrose
Headteacher	Jennifer Allin
Website	www.fairfieldinfantandnurseryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 and 24 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the acting headteachers.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with two members of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses and Ofsted's survey for school staff.
- An inspector spoke informally with parents outside the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, 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 pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime. They scrutinised the school's records for attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Donna Chambers, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Paul Lowther

Ofsted Inspector

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