

Fairway Primary School and Children's Centre

The Fairway, Mill Hill, London NW7 3HS

Inspection dates

31 January to 1 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's energetic and determined leadership has brought about the improvements to the school's performance that were urgently needed. After a significant dip in 2016, standards are rising fast and pupils' progress across the school is now good.
- Teaching and outcomes are good. Teaching in every year group has improved over the past 12 months. This is the result of effective support and challenge from leaders for teachers.
- Pupils value learning and take pride in their school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. No group of pupils is adversely affected by poor attendance.
- Funding is used well to address barriers which pupils face in their learning. This includes work with all disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils who demonstrate that they are capable of attaining higher standards are not challenged as effectively as they could be. This includes some of the most able pupils in the school.
- Children experience good provision in the early years, which includes the childcare setting. They develop curiosity and are keen to use the rich resources provided in both the classroom and the outside area.
- Pupils are kept safe. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. Pupils trust staff and so will discuss any concerns they have with them.
- Boys now make rapid progress in reading and writing. However, they need to make even better progress in order to catch up with the girls.
- A revised curriculum linked to enrichment activities stimulates pupils' learning and provides them with memorable experiences.
- Governance is improving after a period of decline. Although governors offer some challenge, this does not take sufficient account of the information they receive about the progress of different groups of pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective. The school uses its robust systems well to make sure that the well-being of pupils has the highest priority.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and, as a result, raise standards in both key stages, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils and those capable of attaining higher standards receive sufficient challenge in reading, writing and mathematics
 - further raising the challenge provided for boys in their reading and writing.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that governors use information about pupils' progress more effectively to offer sharper challenge to school leaders about the outcomes achieved by different groups of pupils in all key subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since her appointment 18 months ago, the headteacher, ably supported by her senior leadership team, has created a culture in the school whereby staff expect more of the pupils. This increased ambition is understood and promoted effectively by leaders. Strengths are fully recognised, and robust action plans are in place to combat weaknesses that have been accurately identified. Indeed, leaders have been quick to learn the lessons of some underachievement that happened in both key stages in 2016.
- The headteacher has reflected on how the school previously supported and challenged staff to improve performance. She has made changes that have resulted in improved quality of teaching across the school. More frequent meetings, which explore how well different groups of pupils are progressing, help staff understand what they need to do to enhance their own practice. This includes a focus on raising boys' attainment in reading and writing.
- The leadership team monitors teaching and learning well. This has helped leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. The curriculum is well designed as it enables pupils to experience a range of topics, including spending appropriate amounts of time exploring each other's opinions. Such work enables pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- The work of subject leaders, including those responsible for English, mathematics and the wider curriculum, has helped to implement significant changes. Indications are that these changes are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Work in pupils' books and the school's own detailed and accurate assessments show that the standards being achieved by pupils are rapidly improving.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide interventions and activities that accelerate the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The impact of this is analysed well. After clear underachievement in 2016, evidence indicates that current disadvantaged pupils are making progress similar to other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- The sport premium funding is used to improve the physical education (PE) skills of staff and develop after-school activities for pupils. While leaders have not completed a thorough evaluation of the impact of this, it is leading to an increasing number of pupils taking part in a range of sports, including competitive sports.
- Pupils articulate their understanding of the importance of issues relating to equality and diversity well. As a result, pupils show tolerance and respect in the way they work and socialise with their peers. This prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's relationship with the local authority is strong. The local authority representative knows the school well and how senior leaders have improved the school. Reviews undertaken by the local authority have been helpful in identifying weaknesses, which leaders have addressed with a clear sense of urgency.
- Leaders use information about pupils' progress to identify groups who could achieve better standards. They know that pupils with high prior starting points, and others who

are capable of attaining high standards, are not currently challenged as well as they could be.

Governance of the school

- The headteacher commissioned a comprehensive review of governance a few months ago, which judged governance to require improvement. Swift and decisive action has been taken since to reconstitute the governing body to ensure that it is effective and fit for purpose. New governors have been recruited with different, complementary skills. For example, governor's expertise in information technology is currently being used for reviewing the effectiveness of the school's information management systems.
- Governors make sure that school leaders administer performance management of staff effectively so that decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to their performance against meaningful targets. The school's information shows that there is now a strong correlation between pay progression and staff performance.
- Governors ensure that spending decisions are appropriately focused on the school's priorities for improvement, such as when purchasing new teaching materials for literacy. They also ensure that additional funding, such as the pupil premium and primary school sports funding, is targeted in the right places. However, governors' knowledge of the impact of this funding on outcomes is not detailed enough.
- The minutes of governing body meetings confirm that governors have a better understanding of the quality and effectiveness of teaching across the school. They use information about pupils' progress to offer challenge to school leaders, for example about the below-average outcomes achieved in reading and writing in 2016. However, the level of challenge is not sharp enough as it does not make the most effective use of the information provided about variations in the performance of different groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority by the school. Staff and governors all receive regular training to ensure that their knowledge is up to date. Staff demonstrate the impact of training in their day-to-day work to ensure that all pupils remain safe. Thorough checks are made on staff, governors and volunteers to ensure that they are suitable people to work with children.
- There are clear procedures so that staff know what to do if they are worried about a child's well-being. Detailed records confirm that any concerns raised are conscientiously followed up. Good partnerships with external agencies ensure that support is put in place for pupils and their families when it is needed. As a result, children 'step down' from a position of high need to close monitoring followed by very little additional support, as they are now confident to manage without the need for external props.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved over the past 12 months in all year groups and subjects. This is because leaders and teachers have made changes that have proved to be effective. For example, time is made available at the start of the day for some teachers to work with pupils who have not demonstrated a good understanding of their work during recent lessons.
- Information about pupils' progress is now better presented and it enables teachers to quickly identify those pupils falling behind in their learning. Teachers use this information, together with secure knowledge about the different subjects they teach, to inform subsequent work with pupils. This has resulted in pupils making better progress than previously.
- There have been improvements in the teaching of writing since the last inspection and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their written skills in other parts of the curriculum, such as in writing accounts in history or reports in geography. In addition, the more focused approach to developing pupils' skills in grammar and punctuation is also beginning to have a positive impact.
- In mathematics, calculation skills are taught well and, as a result, pupils quickly gain confidence working on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division tasks, at a level that is appropriate for their age. Pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of strategies, from using practical apparatus to more formal written methods, to help them to consolidate their learning.
- Leaders have acted swiftly to improve the effectiveness of teaching in reading, having realised that pupils' comprehension and inference skills were not well developed. In key stage 2, teachers are now dedicating more time to teaching these critical reading skills and engaging pupils with quality texts. As a result, current pupils make good progress in reading.
- In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics has improved considerably and is now an emerging strength of the school. In lessons and when hearing pupils read, inspectors noted that pupils were confidently using phonics to help them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- The most able pupils, together with those who are showing that they can attain high standards, do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable. Sometimes the activities these pupils engage in do not stimulate their minds at a level that sustains high engagement and deeper learning. This happens, for example, when teachers do not ask enough questions that require these pupils to use harder skills, such as analysis and evaluation. As a consequence, on these occasions, pupils' progress is slow.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and every parent who responded to the Parent View survey shared this view. Some pupils commented that the school has a 'family feel', which makes for a safe and secure atmosphere for good learning to take place.
- The school's six values, for example cooperation and responsibility, are promoted well at the school. Pupils work together well when solving problems in class thereby putting these values into practice. Older pupils in particular understand the links between the school's values and British values such as valuing diversity and the rule of law.
- Pupils' work in their books is neat and well presented. This demonstrates that pupils take pride in their work. In lessons, pupils listen to adults' guidance as they trust that such information will help them improve their work further. Good examples were seen when teachers and teaching assistants worked with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are aware that there are different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic bullying and cyber bullying. They know that all bullying is unacceptable, and say that bullying in their school is very rare. Where there have been occasional incidents, such as name-calling, pupils say that teachers have dealt with them quickly and effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are courteous and show good manners around school. They are respectful of others and of their surroundings. This helps to maintain an orderly environment where pupils feel safe.
- Parents and pupils are confident that staff deal with any poor behaviour well. During the inspection, there was no low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn and want to listen to teachers' and fellow pupils' comments. Such attitudes contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have ensured that the small numbers of pupils who need additional support to help them to manage their own behaviour are well catered for. As a result, these pupils are well integrated in lessons and exclusions are rare.
- Pupils' overall attendance rates are slightly below the national average. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. School staff have worked hard to improve the attendance of those pupils who are persistently absent, for example those with diagnosed medical needs. As a result of effective engagement with parents, persistent absence rates are beginning to decline.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was below the national average in both key stages and many pupils underachieved in these key subjects. This was the result of weaker teaching in previous years. Currently, however, pupils' progress is good across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are making considerably better progress in all year groups and subjects than previously. This is because of precisely targeted teaching, which is enabling pupils to reach higher standards. As a result, fewer pupils need to catch up to reach the required standards.
- Many disadvantaged pupils of all abilities underachieved in the previous academic year in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. Leaders have learned the lessons of why this happened and embedded effective strategies to combat this. For example, individual pupils' barriers to learning are now well understood and tackled effectively. The progress of this group of pupils is always discussed at meetings held every half term. Changes are made according to individual pupils' needs. This group of pupils now make good progress as a result. Effective use of funding means that most-able disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates who have similar ability.
- Some most-able pupils also underachieved last year, partly due to teaching which did not probe their understanding well enough. In all current year groups, the most able pupils are making stronger progress as a result of better use of assessment information when planning for their learning. Occasionally, the most able pupils do not learn as deeply as they might because teaching fails to stimulate their highly fertile minds.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or those in the early stages of learning English, make good progress. School leaders and teachers are becoming increasingly adept at identifying those pupils who would benefit from additional support. Teaching assistants then ensure that this focused support is put in place, so that gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and confidence are addressed.
- As a result of well-targeted teaching, current pupils have a secure understanding of phonics. As a result, the majority of pupils attain reading standards required for their year group, with weaker readers also making good progress. Increasingly, pupils use their reading skills well in learning about topics taught in other subjects.
- Scrutiny of books over the past 12 months shows that pupils use accurate grammar and punctuation skills more consistently in their writing. This is helping them to present their ideas coherently when they write about different subjects.
- Boys' attainment in reading and writing in both key stages was below that of girls in the previous academic year. Although boys are now making rapid progress in both key subjects, further challenge is required to ensure that the gap diminishes at a faster pace.

Early years provision

Good

- The on-site childcare provision for two- to four-year-olds is very well led by the children's centre coordinator. His skills and motivation have been instrumental in creating a very special environment for stimulating children's learning and development at the earliest opportunity. As a result, children make strong progress and are well prepared for transition to the first phase of formal schooling.
- Parents welcome close links with the setting and the active role that they are able to play in their children's first school experience, for example through attending 'stay and play' sessions or by contributing to children's electronic learning journeys.
- The setting provides good-quality provision for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know each child's particular needs very well and cater effectively to meet them, meaning that children benefit from individually tailored programmes combined with good levels of care.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age in some areas of learning, but are noticeably lower than that in others, particularly their personal and social development, and their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress during their time in the Nursery as a result of effective teaching that engages them and makes learning enjoyable. The resource-rich environment encourages children to play purposefully and explore different areas of learning while staff skilfully help them to develop their social skills and use of language. Detailed assessments allow staff to identify individual children's learning needs and to plan activities that will move learning forward.
- Good progress is maintained in the Reception Year because staff continue to observe and assess children's learning and development carefully and plan activities that build on children's skills and interests. Staff encourage and develop children's learning through skilful questioning and interactions. The classroom and outdoor area provide very attractive and stimulating learning environments.
- All groups perform well, including boys and any pupils who are disadvantaged. Funding has been used well to improve progress and attainment for disadvantaged children. Since the previous inspection, however, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been below the national average.
- Effective leadership of the early years has secured ongoing improvements in the quality of provision. As a consequence, a higher proportion of children compared to previous years are now on track to achieve a good level of development. The school's information, supported by children's work, demonstrates that this represents good progress from children's starting points.
- Relationships between adults and children are warm and positive. Children's behaviour is good and they get on well with each other. All statutory welfare requirements are met and children's safety and well-being are given a high priority.

School details

Unique reference number	101278
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10023689

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	All-through Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair (designate)	Miranda Perry
Headteacher	Alison Edmonds
Telephone number	0208 359 5380
Website	fairway.barnet.sch.uk
Email address	office@fairway.barnet.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2012

Information about this school

- This is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school with a children’s centre. The childcare provision for two- to four-year-olds is managed by the governing body and was therefore inspected as a part of the school’s early years provision. The school offers 40 full-time equivalent places in the childcare setting.
- In addition, the school Nursery provides 26 full-time equivalent places (52 places in total), and one full-time Reception class. There is one class for all other year groups with the exception of Year 4, which has two.
- The school serves a diverse community with pupils coming from a variety of different backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. However, a small minority are at an early stage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average.
- The school is co-located with Northway Special School, which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The current headteacher commenced post in September 2015.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons, year groups and subjects. They also looked at pupils' work in books, records of children's learning in the early years and other information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked informally with pupils around the school and in the playground.
- Inspectors considered the 62 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 42 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- Meetings were held with six governors, including the chair-designate of the governing body. Meetings were also held with leaders responsible for mathematics and English, curriculum development, provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and for children in the early years.
- Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' attainment and progress, the school's reviews of its own performance, checks on the quality of teaching and development plans. Inspectors also examined safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- The inspection, deemed a section 8, was converted to a section 5 inspection on the first day.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Matthews	Ofsted Inspector
Des Dunne	Ofsted Inspector
Meena Walia	Ofsted 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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