



# Fairfields School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122160  
**LEA** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 281172  
**Inspection dates** 7 February 2006 to 7 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Charlie Henry HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Trinity Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Northampton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Northamptonshire NN2 6JN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 714777
<b>Number on roll</b>	71	<b>Fax number</b>	01604 714245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Mark James
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Corallie Murray

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 February 2006 - 7 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281172
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Fairfields is a school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties and physical and communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. Some pupils also have visual and hearing difficulties. Almost all pupils have statements of special educational needs; the others are undergoing statutory assessment. There are more boys than girls. Most pupils are from White British heritage; very few have English as an additional language. Pupils come from Northampton and south Northamptonshire. The school provides opportunities for pupils attending other local schools to share its specialist facilities and expertise, as well as a School for Parents to provide support and guidance for parents of pre-school children who have a physical disability.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Fairfields is an outstanding school. Pupils throughout the school make excellent progress. Children at the Foundation Stage also make outstanding progress. Pupils feel safe, enjoy school and work hard. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and comprehensive, although is too modest when evaluating its strengths. Through careful assessment, staff know each pupil very well indeed and use this information to set challenging targets. Rigorous monitoring of how well pupils are learning enables expectations to remain appropriately high. Excellent teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils' progress is outstanding. The curriculum is excellent. It provides an exciting range of learning opportunities and includes specialist programmes to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. The care, support and guidance of pupils are outstanding. An excellent range of specialist staff work closely with teacher and classroom support staff to provide specialist advice and ensure specialist resources are used effectively.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and leadership team lead by example; they set very high standards in their own work. Enthusiastic team work is a notable strength of the school. The staff have established the school as a centre of expertise within the community. Improvement planning is excellent; there has been very effective development since the last inspection. The school demonstrates excellent capacity for further improvement; it provides excellent value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

No significant improvement is required to raise standards. The school has identified aspects that it wishes to improve further and has already begun work on these.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

As a result of their learning needs, all pupils enter the school with standards that are below, and often well below, what is expected for other youngsters of their age. Overall, pupils make outstanding progress, given their abilities and starting points, during the time they are at school. Achievement is consistently very good and often excellent across all areas of the curriculum. Comparisons with the progress made by pupils from other schools and who have similar special educational needs shows that pupils at Fairfield's do very well. Achievement is also excellent for children in the Foundation Stage. These levels of achievement and progress are because pupils are taught exceptionally well from a very well planned and organised curriculum. There are no significant differences between the progress made by different groups of pupils.

Most pupils make outstanding progress towards achieving targets within their individual education plans that are set at their annual reviews. Progress towards achieving these challenging targets is rigorously planned for and monitored.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils behave exceptionally well. Those who have behaviour difficulties make excellent progress towards meeting the school's high expectations. Attendance is good. Although there is a significant amount of absence from school, this is due to illness and other medical reasons. Pupils develop excellent relationships with the adults who help them; they work very hard and are eager to please. They enjoy coming to school and come in happily each day because they feel safe and secure. Pupils learn very well through the opportunities they are given to develop healthier lifestyles. They make good use of the range of drinks that are available throughout the school day and the fruit and vegetables that are provided at break times. Pupils contribute very well to the local and wider community. They take part in a range of local and international fundraising events, especially in helping support a school in Uganda and homeless people in this country. Further contribution to the school community includes expressing their views within their class councils, for example, in successfully putting forward ideas about changes to the lunchtime menu. Pupils progress very well in gaining skills to develop their economic awareness, especially in improving their speaking and listening, and other aspects of literacy and numeracy. For example, each class decided how to spend the money given as part of achieving a Healthy Schools Award.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The excellent achievements made by pupils throughout the school are a result of the outstanding quality of teaching and learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Lessons are very carefully planned, based on a thorough understanding of each pupil's needs and their learning targets. Teachers and assistants work very effectively together to ensure pupils are always busy. Classes are calm and the management of any difficult behaviour is low key and very effective. The pace of lessons is good and activities are exciting. Pupils remain interested and well motivated throughout. Changes from one activity to the next are very effectively managed; this is especially successful for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Staff build very good and trusting relationships with their pupils, based on an expectation that each one can achieve very well. They explain clearly what they need to do, using appropriate language, signing and symbol/picture communication aids. As a result, pupils try very hard and enjoy their work. Teachers involve parents very well in their children's education, including in setting targets, through the home/school books and by providing training, such as signing.

Assessment of how well pupils are learning is very thorough and rigorous. Staff monitor how well pupils are learning through questions and observing what they are doing.

Progress towards achieving the targets on individual education plans is carefully noted and used to plan the next steps. Similarly, records of achievements across all areas of the curriculum are regularly updated and ensures expectations remain high. Assessment to meet any additional needs, including for speech and language therapy and physiotherapy, is also very effective, identifying, for example, if any augmentative and assistive communication aids are required.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is excellent. It is exceptionally well planned to match pupils' needs, especially in developing their communication skills. The range of subjects and topics is broad and very stimulating. The Foundation Stage curriculum prepares children exceptionally well for their next stage of learning. There are also outstanding arrangements for additional specialist aspects such as conductive education for pupils who have physical disabilities and the use of individual programmes for pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. The very high quality provision for pupils' personal and social skills extends through all aspects of their timetable, including at break and lunchtimes. There are very good opportunities for the children to begin to develop basic information and communication technology skills, including for extending their communication.

The local community is used very well, for example, in trips to shops to practise communication and numeracy skills. The curriculum is very effectively enriched with activities that take place during lunchtimes and through visits, in particular, residential ones to exciting places like Disneyland. Visiting artists and performers enhance music, drama and art very well. There are very good links with other schools to extend learning opportunities. A significant number of pupils attend other schools each week and a large number of other schools' pupils visit Fairfield to benefit from their facilities and expertise.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Risk assessment and guidance, for example, for lifting children who have physical disabilities, are very detailed. Similarly, behaviour plans for those pupils who need them provide clear guidance for all staff. Safeguarding procedures and child protection requirements are firmly established and understood by staff.

There is an excellent range of therapists and other educational and medical support staff, including for music therapy and specialist advice for pupils who have visual or hearing impairments. These specialists work very effectively with teachers and classroom support staff to ensure pupils' additional needs are met well.

Pupils are prepared very effectively for their next school. The annual review meeting provides the starting point for this process and leads to visits, sharing of information

and a planned transition programme. The strong relationship with other schools helps this process.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher and leadership team set an exceptionally clear vision and direction for the school as a centre of expertise within the community. The standard of their work provides an outstanding example for all of the school. They have built a strong and cohesive team who work together very well. Parents are very pleased with their children's education and feel very involved. Equality of opportunities is promoted very well.

The school's self-evaluation is detailed and comprehensive, although it is too modest in evaluating its strengths. It is very effectively informed by rigorous quality assurance. Important aspects of the school's work are routinely monitored. Pupils' target setting and their learning are exceptionally well monitored, including through moderation with other schools. School development planning is excellent. Analysis of pupils' learning and the quality of lessons is used to plan for further improvements and for identifying training needs. The continuing professional development programme for staff is excellent.

The governors are very supportive. They are well informed about developments, through detailed reports from the headteacher and other staff and from visits to the school. Implementation of the school's development plan is routinely monitored.

Finance is well managed and links effectively with priorities established in the school development plan. Recent carry forwards are being used to support the budget while the local authority reviews funding arrangements for the school. Resources are used well. The school provides excellent value for money.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very successful. This track record, together with the excellent quality assurance and development planning, demonstrate excellent capacity for further improvement.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we recently visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel so welcome. We really enjoyed it and learned a lot about your school. Thank you for telling us about the things you do and what you like about school.

We really liked your school and think it is outstanding. It is a very, very special place.

What we liked about your school:

The way you all work so hard, enjoy school and want to learn.

The progress you make, especially towards your targets.

The care that all staff take of you.

The exciting things that you learn.

The way your teachers, assistants and other adults help you learn.

The way your school is run.