



# **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**FAIRFIELD PNEU SCHOOL**

**STANDARD INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## Fairfield PNEU School

Full Name of School	<b>Fairfield PNEU School</b>
DfE Number	<b>802/6003</b>
Registered Charity No	<b>310215</b>
Address	<b>Fairfield PNEU School Fairfield Way Farleigh Road Backwell Bristol BS48 3PD</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01275 462 743</b>
Fax Number	<b>01275 464 347</b>
Email Address	<b><a href="mailto:secretary@fairfieldschool.org.uk">secretary@fairfieldschool.org.uk</a></b>
Head	<b>Mrs Lesley Barton</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mr Richard Corke</b>
Age Range	<b>3 to 11</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>116</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (55 boys; 61 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>3-5: 25 5-11: 91</b>
Number of Day Pupils Total	<b>116</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection dates	<b>07 Dec 2010 to 08 Dec 2010 17 Jan 2011 to 19 Jan 2011</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection was conducted to assess the suitability of Fairfield PNEU School for membership of ISA and ISBA. This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*.

The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in September 2006.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010\*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

\*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31<sup>st</sup> August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the Requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its Services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Fairfield School is a preparatory school with 116 pupils on roll, 55 boys and 61 girls, from three to eleven years of age. It is situated in Backwell, on the outskirts of Bristol. The school was founded in 1935 under the auspices of the Parents' National Education Union whose motto, 'I am, I can, I ought, I will', encapsulates the school's ethos. The aims of the school are to enable every child to have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential intellectually, socially and physically and to achieve competency in all areas of learning through the main aspects of the National Curriculum. The school is governed by the governing council.
- 1.2 The ability profile of the school is above the national average, although the range of abilities is fairly wide. Ten pupils have been identified by the school as needing additional support for learning difficulties and/or disabilities. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are no pupils at present for whom English is an additional language. Most of the pupils live within easy travelling distance of the school.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection there were 25 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 22 of whom were government funded. There were 91 pupils in Years 1 to 6. The younger pupils are taught using the EYFS curriculum; the headmistress is the head of this department. Entry into the Nursery is non-selective but pupils joining later are assessed and informally interviewed.
- 1.4 Since the last inspection in 2006 the school has made improvements to its premises and resources. A new medical facility is in place, there is a new information and communications technology (ICT) suite, and all classrooms and the hall are equipped with interactive whiteboards. After-school hours have been extended and a summer holiday activity club introduced. Residential visits have been extended, and the use of technology increased with the website and electronic communication with parents. An area of land for use as a car park has been acquired.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **2.(a) Main findings**

- 2.1 From the EYFS onwards, pupils' achievements and their learning, attitude, skills and personal development are of a high standard. The school is successful in achieving its aims of promoting high standards within its ethos of valuing each pupil highly and supporting its motto – 'I am, I can, I ought, I will'. Pupils develop a love of learning and demonstrate through their exemplary behaviour and enthusiasm that they enjoy their school life. They achieve so well as a result of consistently good teaching and an interesting and varied curriculum, which includes a very wide range of extracurricular opportunities. Since the last inspection, pupils' results in national tests at the age of eleven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. The results are good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress to the age of eleven is above the average for pupils of similar ability. The teaching and assessment are good. The school has recently devised new assessment procedures, which they now plan to extend. In some lessons observed the plenary at the end of the lesson was not sufficient to check that all pupils had understood and achieved the learning objectives. The EYFS outside area has been designated as an area for further development.
- 2.2 Pupils' personal development is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This care stems from the family atmosphere of mutual respect and support. Very careful attention is paid to the pupils' welfare, health and safety and the school is a very safe place in which to work and learn. Pupils were very enthusiastic in their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and confirmed that they enjoy school very much. The inspectors agreed that it is an exceptionally happy school. Relationships at all levels are very positive.
- 2.3 The ethos of the school is clearly overseen by the leadership and management and the governing council. The school has been pro-active in fulfilling the recommendations of the previous inspection. It has greatly improved the resources and teaching of ICT and the appointment of subject co-ordinators has strengthened the leadership. Parents, carers and guardians are very supportive of the school. This was confirmed through their very positive responses to the questionnaires. Inspection findings concur with the parents' views.

## **2.(b) Action points**

### **(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements**

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface).

2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

### **(ii) Recommendations for further improvement**

2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Continue to develop and implement the recently introduced assessment procedures.
2. Ensure that all lessons end with an effective plenary.
3. Continue the development of the EYFS outdoor area to ensure that part of the curriculum is taken outside more effectively.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills**

- 3.1 From the EYFS onwards, the pupils are well educated in accordance with the aims of the school, and their overall achievement is outstanding. The pupils demonstrate through their lessons and written work that they understand and make very good progress in their learning. They develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in a warm, supportive environment where each pupil is highly valued. Their numeracy and literacy skills are very well developed. Pupils' creativity is promoted well, through the challenge of participating in regular, high quality drama and music productions. They are articulate and confident to ask for help when they need it in an unassuming and natural way. Their writing develops very well: younger pupils form their letters well and begin to write stories and the older ones write fluently in imaginative and factual contexts. Pupils possess an enthusiasm and developing understanding of mathematics, and the progress of the older pupils is helped by setting arrangements according to ability. Pupils now use ICT confidently and effectively throughout the curriculum and those in Year 6 have the opportunity to further extend their ICT skills in music technology. They take part in investigative work in science and enjoy the cross-curricular work, especially in history, geography and art. Pupils have frequent opportunities for physical activities using the attractive school grounds. They apply themselves very well and show interest and enthusiasm in their work. The presentation of their work is of high quality, demonstrating the concentration and effort they put into it.
- 3.2 Since the last inspection pupils' results in National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven have been above the national average for maintained primary schools. The results are good in relation to pupils' abilities, indicating that their progress to the age of eleven is above the average for pupils of similar ability. The school identifies pupils with learning problems at an early stage; these are closely monitored, and very good support given where necessary. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are identified early, extended within lessons and given additional targeted lessons. These include higher order thinking skills, about which the pupils are very enthusiastic, enjoying the freedom to think 'outside the box'. Year 6 pupils achieve significant success in gaining places of their choice at their senior school and scholarships are won regularly.
- 3.3 The school achieves much success in local sporting events. Many individual pupils have achieved success in music, drama and sporting achievements. There is a high standard in the creative arts, especially the quality of pupils' musical achievement. Their success in academic work, sport and creative arts owes much to their positive attitudes, the opportunities provided by the curriculum and the quality of the teaching they receive. Their behaviour is exemplary and they enjoy extremely good relationships among themselves and with the teachers and other staff.

### **3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)**

- 3.4 The curriculum and the resources supporting it are highly effective in enabling the pupils to reach high standards across a wide range of subjects and activities. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils' ages and abilities very well. The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education (RE), which supports the aims of the school effectively. French, Spanish and Latin are introduced during Key Stage 2 and drama takes the form of productions, concerts and assemblies throughout the key stages. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are important elements of the whole curriculum. The PSHE programme includes an extensive range of life skills using the Life Education Centre. The provision and teaching of ICT has developed since the last inspection and now all pupils have regular timetabled lessons in the very well equipped ICT suite. Year 6 pupils produce an attractive yearbook using their ICT skills and now have music technology lessons. The interactive whiteboards are in very frequent use, for example the older pupils have a children's news programme as a stimulus for discussion at the beginning of each day. The school puts strong emphasis on keeping the pupils healthy. All pupils from Year 1 have an opportunity for physical development on three or four days each week, including physical education lessons, music and movement and games taught by specialist staff using the facilities at the school and off-site swimming.
- 3.5 The pupils have an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, which range from judo to jewellery making, and include a very wide range of sports and music tuition. These are available both during lunch hour and after school and are very well attended. A very wide range of visits outside the school and visitors to the school further enhances the curriculum. Visits have recently included Stourhead Gardens, Radstock Museum and the Roman Baths. Recent visitors have included the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company, who re-enacted their interpretation of the Nativity.
- 3.6 The pupils take part in many local sporting events, such as sports fixtures against local maintained and independent schools and ISA regional sporting events. Some pupils have represented the southwest in sport. These activities provide supportive links with the local community, which benefit the pupils.

### **3.(c) The contribution of teaching**

- 3.7 The well-informed and helpful teaching, which is of good quality, is effective in promoting pupils' progress. An excellent feature is the existence of very good relationships between the staff and the pupils, which promote a positive learning atmosphere of trust and co-operation. This enables the pupils to confidently request help and advice when they need it. Staff generally plan their lessons well, based on their good subject knowledge. Lessons begin with a relevant starter activity to focus the pupils and share the learning objective. An appropriate range of activities follows, which enable the pupils to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pace of lessons is mainly brisk, with good use made of the plentiful resources, and most pupils are kept on task. In the best lessons the work given to the pupils is very well matched to their abilities, interests and engages them and is carefully structured to ensure

that they can complete it independently or with little support. In some lessons the plenary at the end of the lesson is not sufficient to check that all pupils have understood and achieved the learning objectives. The assessment of learning within the lessons is good. The teachers have a clear understanding of each pupil's abilities, as informed by standardised assessments and assessment procedures. New assessment initiatives focusing on identifying each pupil's ability in writing have been introduced recently. It is planned that these will now be extended to include all aspects of English and mathematics. Each pupil's progress is tracked and an individual target given, which is known by pupils and is also shared with parents in the informative twice-yearly reports and at consultation evenings.

- 3.8 Basic skills are strongly emphasised in English and mathematics from Year 1 onwards but all subjects are given an appropriate allocation of time. Effective crosscurricular learning is promoted, for example in history, when older pupils study Victorian life, examine census material and use ICT resources well. Creative work is promoted particularly in music and art, with younger pupils painting in the style of Kandinsky and the senior choir learning new songs for their next concert. There are attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school celebrating their achievement.
- 3.9 The quality of marking is good, as staff use symbols which the pupils understand and positive feedback is given both in the books and in lessons. Pupils confirmed that they knew how much progress they were making as staff told them and they could see by the work marked in their books. The pupils are encouraged to present their work very well and they took pride in showing it to the inspectors.

#### **4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

- 4.1 All pupils, including the children in the EYFS, develop excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils are self-confident, trust and respect their teachers, and behave very well in the class and around the school.
- 4.2 The spiritual development of pupils is very strong; they have an awareness and understanding of their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. Circle time, pupils' 'thought for the day' and classroom strategies provided to share experiences and celebrate good work and ideas, assist this development. RE lessons include introductions to world religions and displays in the library raise awareness of religious festivals around the world.
- 4.3 Pupils have a very strong moral awareness. They have an excellent knowledge of right and wrong, as identified in the 'I ought' section of the school motto. Pupils take great pride in their school. They all contributed to a 'We are proud as peacocks' display. The PSHE programme, the expressive arts, assemblies, and the widely respected school and classroom rules maintain and develop these moral values.
- 4.4 The school is a very sociable community. Pupils eagerly accept responsibility through participation in the house and school councils. Events such as a talent contest and celebratory disco are examples of projects initiated by the councils. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. All Year 6 pupils have responsibilities as prefects and house captains and they wear their badges with great pride. A family atmosphere permeates the dining hall where table monitors take responsibility for encouraging good manners. Pupils much enjoy participating in the reading buddy scheme, which provides them with further responsibility and where they make friends with younger pupils.
- 4.5 Pupils have enthusiastically participated in charitable projects. Links with the wider community include sporting fixtures against local independent and maintained schools in sports such as netball, football and tag rugby. Visits outside school increase the pupils' understanding of English services and institutions and a visit to the Houses of Parliament is planned for the very near future. Recent visitors to the school have included representatives from Holbourne museum and a Bible storyteller.
- 4.6 Pupils of all faiths and cultures are welcomed into the school, and racial and cultural diversity is celebrated. Pupils learn about cultures and faiths other than their own in their lessons and have wider cultural experiences through school visits. They participate with great enthusiasm in projects which have been developed with schools in the European Union.
- 4.7 Pupils were very enthusiastic in their response to the questionnaires. They confirm that they enjoy coming to the school, and that staff help them to learn and are supportive and helpful. The pupils made very many positive comments in relation to teaching and opportunities to take positions of responsibility.

**4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety**

- 4.8 The pastoral care for pupils and for children in the EYFS is excellent and helps fulfil the school's aims of providing a stimulating education within a friendly environment. An atmosphere of trust and encouragement permeates the school. The strong pastoral structure provides effective support for the pupils, who are very well cared for. All pupils are given very good support and guidance by the staff, and this helps to support the very positive relationships.
- 4.9 The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are excellent. Thorough and effective procedures ensure that the school is a safe place in which to work and learn. Rigorous procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils, with key staff trained to a high level, all staff trained appropriately and the detailed policy implemented effectively. The procedures to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying are effective, and the pupils are adamant that there is no bullying and that any minor incidents are dealt with very quickly. The procedures for fire prevention are very thorough; there is a detailed fire risk assessment, regular fire drills are held and documented, and all fire appliances are checked annually. Detailed risk assessments are carried out on all activities both within school and on visits and activities outside the school, and the associated policy is implemented effectively. All accidents are carefully recorded, several qualified first aiders are on site and a suitable medical room is now available. The pupils are very well supervised throughout the day. The attendance and admission registers are maintained and kept as required. The school has devised an appropriate three-year plan to provide accessibility to the school.
- 4.10 Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and the nutritious school lunches are a social occasion with older pupils taking the lead in family groups, helping to serve the younger pupils. The school is working towards an Eco School award. Regular planned exercise and well-supervised school play times help to promote the pupils' health and well-being effectively.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) The quality of governance**

- 5.1 Governance of the school by the governing council is excellent; it provides very effective oversight of the school in line with its aims, and discharges its responsibilities for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources very efficiently.
- 5.2 The governors have a very detailed knowledge and understanding of the way the school operates on a daily basis; the chairman visits weekly and the rest of the council visits regularly. They are very effective in exercising their monitoring role and appraise the headmistress and bursar regularly. They provide very good support for the headmistress in her monitoring of the staff, as the chairman provides a follow-up interview with staff. A recommendation at the last inspection was that additional senior staff be appointed. However, the governors and headmistress consider that, given other recent staff appointments, additional senior staff are currently not necessary for the effective running of the school. The inspectors agree with their view. The governing council has clear vision and direction. It is pro-active in helping the school to move forward and provide appropriate challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement through the very well thought out five-year development plan.
- 5.3 The governing council is very supportive, and through its various committees provides strong business expertise and a comprehensive range of skills and experience. It is effective in discharging their responsibilities for child protection, welfare, health and safety throughout the school.

### **5.(b) The quality of leadership and management**

- 5.4 Leadership and management are very effective in ensuring accordance with the aims of the school. All school policies are implemented effectively and reviewed regularly and safeguarding of the pupils is made a priority. The headmistress is highly successful in securing, supporting and developing her staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils regarding safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. A recommendation at the last inspection was that additional senior staff be appointed. New subject co-ordinators have been appointed and new staff appointments have made a significant difference in extending staff expertise. Effective staff appraisal takes place each year in the autumn term. Staff are encouraged to source appropriate professional development, and opportunities and targets are agreed in their appraisal sessions, which the headmistress then summarises in writing. Lesson observations form part of the appraisal process and very recently introduced peer observation promotes the sharing of best practice. A comprehensive staff induction programme is followed. The suitability for employment of all staff and governors is checked thoroughly and the information held on the required single central register of staff appointments.

- 5.5 The school is provided with very clear educational direction. Together the headmistress and governors have devised a comprehensive school development plan, which helps to move the school forward. The school self-evaluation is well thought out with realistic priorities identified and reviewed regularly. The parents confirm that the school is led and managed very well and that they are kept fully informed of all relevant developments.
- 5.6 The headmistress knows all the pupils very well and is very approachable. The excellent personal development of the pupils and the high quality of the education provided is due to the commitment and dedication of the whole staff team. This is a school where all adults, both teaching and non-teaching staff, work together for the benefit of the pupils.

**5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians**

- 5.7 Parents, carers and guardians are very strongly supportive of the school. This was confirmed through their very high response to the questionnaires. Parents made many positive comments about the quality of education and care in the school. The inspectors fully agreed with these views.
- 5.8 Parents receive very detailed information through the attractive website and prospectus, and the recent introduction of email has proved very beneficial. They receive regular informative reports on their children's work and progress and have the opportunity to meet staff at consultation evenings. They confirm that the staff are very approachable.
- 5.9 Through the Parents' Association, parents have many opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. They attend productions, concerts and sporting fixtures and are enthusiastic in their response, as seen during the Christmas productions.
- 5.10 The school handles the concerns of parents with care and follows its published procedures diligently. There have been no formal complaints since the previous inspection.

**What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.**

## **6. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

### **6.(a) The overall effectiveness of the early years provision – how well the school meets the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.1 The overall effectiveness of the setting is outstanding. All staff know the children very well and provide a stimulating and caring environment in which all thrive. Assessments gained through careful observations enable the needs of each child to be very well met and contribute to their rapid development, as do the imaginative range of learning opportunities. Children make very good progress in their learning. Effective links with parents help to involve them in their children's care and education. Rigorous self-evaluation enables existing high standards to be maintained, as well as allowing the identification of areas for improvement. Since the previous inspection the introduction of learning diaries and baseline assessment on entry has improved the effectiveness of the tracking process.

### **6.(b) The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.2 Leadership and management are outstanding. Rigorous implementation of comprehensive policies, supported by detailed risk assessments, ensures children's safety and safeguarding. The strong relationship with parents, fostered by the daily contact at the start of the day and by the reading diary, helps in the overall development of each child. Excellent observation, recording and tracking, together with the open door policy that exists, enable parents to be fully informed of their children's progress. Staff work as a happy, caring and effective team which reflects upon its practice regularly, plans for improvement and has a clear vision of the way forward. Effective implementation of policies ensures that each child has an equal opportunity to succeed, supported by the careful use of a wide range of appropriate and accessible resources.

### **6.(c) The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.3 The quality of the provision is outstanding. The well-qualified staff provide a stimulating setting which enables all children to learn and develop. The role play area within Reception provides an excellent opportunity for creative and imaginative play and is extremely popular. Staff plan a good rotation of resources. Whilst the outdoor area for the Nursery is well resourced, the school has identified this as an area for future development to enable even more of the curriculum to be taken outside more effectively. An excellent balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities encourages children's independence. Their care and welfare are promoted effectively. Risk assessments for all aspects, including outings, together with regular checks of equipment, create a safe environment.

**6.(d) Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

6.4 The outcomes for children in the EYFS are outstanding. They enjoy learning and make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning in relation to their starting points and capabilities, especially in literacy and numeracy. Children in Nursery have settled very well and have gained independence and are beginning to make choices. By the end of Reception, most children are able to read, write short sentences, use numbers very well and are confident when using computers to click and drag shapes to make pictures. First-hand experiences ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the world has strong foundations. They respond imaginatively to situations and enjoy role play and storytelling. They understand that physical exercise and healthy eating, together with personal hygiene, are essential for a healthy lifestyle; they have a good awareness of personal safety. Their personal development is very good. They are inquisitive, enthusiastic and self-motivated, relating extremely well to one another and to adults.

**Section 2 includes what the Early Years Foundation Stage should do to improve its provision.**

**INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited the facilities for sick or injured pupils. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

**Inspectors**

Mrs Jill Bainton Reporting Inspector

Mr Jonathan Atkin Deputy Head, IAPS School

Mr Stephen Yeo Head, ISA School

Mr Richard Balding Early Years Co-ordinating Inspector