

Inspection of Fairfield High School

Peterchurch, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 0SG

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Paul Jennings. This school is a single academy trust. The headteacher is the accounting officer. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Fiona McHale.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Fairfield High School is a welcoming and caring school. Teachers challenge pupils to do, and be, their best at all times. Pupils recognise and value the support they receive from staff and, as a result, they work hard and achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They attend school regularly and work hard. Pupils enjoy attending the extensive range of clubs on offer. There is something for every pupil, including academic support, sports clubs, creative clubs, a diversity and equality club and opportunities to meet quietly with others. The school offers and promotes a range of very well-thought-out experiences, trips and visits that help pupils to learn about their locality and region, as well as about global issues. Pupils visit universities and colleges, learn about apprenticeships, and meet with local employers. Pupils are very well prepared for their next steps.

The school has worked hard to create a culture of success and aspiration and to make sure that every pupil is recognised for what they do well. Pupils celebrate the successes of their peers and seek help for their friends if needed. This all contributes to a community where everyone is valued and achievement is prized.

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

The school has put in place a well-considered curriculum that identifies exactly what should be taught and when. Because of this precision, pupils build on their prior learning well in lessons. Pupils are able to make effective links to what they already know and apply their knowledge to new situations confidently and accurately in all subjects. Pupils achieve exceptionally well.

The school's broad curriculum reflects pupils' ambitions and experiences well. Leaders have made sure that vocational subjects are carefully selected so that pupils who study them have the skills and knowledge to progress to further and higher education. Animal care is a popular subject at key stage 3, and pupils are challenged to think hard about animal welfare and sustainable practices, as well as to learn to care for the farm and small animals on the school site. The wide curriculum offer is a real strength of the school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve very highly. Pupils' needs are identified quickly, and teachers know which pupils need support and what support to give them. Leaders make sure that the strategies staff use to meet the needs of pupils with SEND are effective, making changes and adaptations as required.

Pupils who find reading difficult are given excellent support. The school identifies any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge and puts in place a rigorous programme to make sure that pupils catch up with their peers quickly. The school has recently implemented the same approach to improving any gaps in mathematical knowledge

that pupils may have when they join the school. As a result of these actions, all pupils make excellent progress.

Pupils benefit from exceptional pastoral care. All staff know pupils extremely well and step in quickly if pupils need help. Safeguarding leaders go above and beyond in securing the help that pupils may need. As a result of the school's meticulous care, pupils know that their concerns are listened to. Pupils are taught about the risks they may face. The school is alert to what pupils may be exposed to in the wider community, and pupils are taught how to recognise and respond to new harms. For example, pupils have recently been learning about derogatory language and behaviour. As a result of this high-quality learning, pupils are respectful of one another and understand and demonstrate important concepts, such as equality and diversity.

School leaders and trustees are relentless in making sure that pupils at Fairfield get the very best education. The new headteacher and chair of trustees have recognised the many strengths of the school and some areas they would like to be even better. They have a sensible timescale for the improvements they have identified. Trustees take their roles very seriously. They understand the importance of the decisions that they make for pupils at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	140868
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10294598
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	583
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fiona McHale
Headteacher	Paul Jennings
Website	www.fairfield.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2013

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in September 2023.
- The school is a single academy trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, geography and languages. 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 spoke to subject leaders and discussed the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- Inspectors visited lessons in a number of additional subjects.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 reviewed school documentation.
- Inspectors met with a group of trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and in formal meetings. Inspectors reviewed the results of the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with staff and took account of the online staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the results of Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Claire Price, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Janet Lewis

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