

Foxes Piece School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	131523
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	381355
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Kirk

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Taylor
Headteacher	Chris Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2009
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	9–10 January 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Kirk

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited ten lessons taught by nine teachers, together with a number of shorter observations. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and observed the school's work. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. She observed the school's work, listened to pupils read, and scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information and teachers' planning. She also analysed questionnaires from staff and pupils, as well as 62 received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Foxes Piece is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The school has just over one third of pupils on the special needs register, and a higher proportion than most schools of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds, with about 25% of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school exceeded the government's floor targets for pupils' achievement in 2011. In 2010 the school did not take part in the national testing of 11-year-olds, and in 2009 it was below the floor target. There is an on-site day-care nursery and a pre-school, which are not managed by the governing body and are subject to a separate inspection. The school holds Healthy Schools Status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Since the previous inspection the school has increased in size by about one third.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This thriving, inclusive school provides a good quality of education for its pupils.
- Achievement is good for all groups of pupils and attainment by the end of Year 6 is now average in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is good, a particular strength being teachers’ feedback to pupils so they know where they have achieved well and where they need to improve. However, improvements in English teaching have not yet been consistently applied to mathematics teaching. As a result, although progress is good in both subjects, it has accelerated faster in English than in mathematics. In some mathematics lessons teachers take too long to explain new concepts, reducing the pace of the lessons.
- Pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Teachers are particularly skilled at supporting pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. Pupils feel safe and secure.
- Pupils’ good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in them being keen to learn and curious about the people and world around them.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage has many good features, including its leadership. The leader analyses outcomes for children carefully and adapts future planning and provision to ensure that there is continuous improvement.
- The school is well led by an effective headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body, who have high expectations of themselves, of the staff and of the pupils. All staff are highly committed to helping the pupils to achieve the best that they can. The school’s current data analysis is thorough and detailed. However, as a result of the increased size of cohorts in the school, its current method of analysis is time consuming and limited in its effectiveness to make direct comparisons between some groups of pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in mathematics so that it matches that in English, by:
 - reducing direct teaching time in some lessons and increasing the pace so that pupils have more time to practise their new skills
 - sharing the good practice already used by some teachers in using the

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'steps to success' and other successful teaching methods to help pupils understand new concepts and calculations.

- Improve analysis of the tracking information on groups of pupils so that senior leaders and members of the governing body can use this information to inform and support their monitoring and evaluation.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

From starting points that are low compared to those expected for their age, pupils achieve well and attainment by the end of Year 6 is average. Pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic to learn new skills and concepts. The neat and careful presentation of their work reflects their good attitudes and the high expectations from their teachers. Although good progress is made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by the time pupils start Year 1, their skills are still below average in all areas. By the end of Year 2, pupils' reading skills have accelerated and are now average because of the good teaching of linking sounds and letters (phonics), guided reading and the carefully targeted use of interventions with those who require additional support to accelerate their reading. Reading standards by the time pupils leave the school are average and improving. Progress is accelerating in all year groups as a result of improved teaching since the last inspection. Pupils' good progress is reflected across the curriculum and across all groups of pupils, as work set appropriately challenges all pupils. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils had to work out the cost of purchasing multiple copies of various comics, but the more-able pupils were also required to work out the change that they would give from a set amount.

Pupils develop and apply their reading writing, communication and mathematics skills well in a range of other subjects, ensuring that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. As a result of well-targeted support and good quality interventions, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well, with some making outstanding progress. For example, in an outstanding lesson observed in the school's nurture provision, pupils acted out the story of a pirate whose friends had hidden his boots and coat. One pupil, who in previous lessons struggled to participate successfully, showed empathy with the pirate, spontaneously joining in with the story through her own spoken words and actions. Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well as a result of the school striving to meet all pupils' needs well. For example, a teacher in a geography lesson supported a pupil in the early stages of learning English through appropriate bilingual explanations. Most parents and carers are rightly confident that their children are achieving well.

Quality of teaching

Lessons are interesting and fun and teachers encourage pupils to use their imagination and undertake practical tasks, investigations and experiments. Teaching across the curriculum is good and teachers make good use of cross-curricular links to inspire and motivate pupils. For example, pupils in a good English lesson in Year 5

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and 6 used the success criteria for persuasive writing to help them plan an oral presentation to persuade visitors to engage in futuristic travel to a particular planet. As a basis for this imaginative work pupils also used their previous scientific research about each planet. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural skills are developed well, and as a result pupils have a good ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and understand how their chosen actions impact on others. They show a sense of enjoyment in learning about the world around them and are developing an ever-increasing respect for the cultural diversity of different nations across the world. This understanding has been supported through a link with a school in Bangladesh and Perth, Western Australia and through regular celebrations of a range of religious festivals.

Much professional development work has been undertaken by teachers to improve their teaching, specifically to accelerate pupils' progress in reading and writing, which has been successful. A similar process has now started in mathematics, but as yet there are still some inconsistencies in the teaching of this subject. At times, teachers spend too much time teaching new skills or concepts in mathematics, which slows the pace of the lesson and results in reducing the amount of time pupils have to practise what they have learnt. Furthermore, in English and across many other subjects, teachers use success criteria and good continuous working displays to exemplify current learning for pupils. As yet, these techniques are not being successfully exploited in mathematics by all teachers.

Teachers' use of assessment to support learning is a strength of the school. Planning takes good account of prior learning and during the lessons pupils know what they need to do to achieve well. This is linked well to their individual targets in literacy and numeracy, which are regularly reviewed, and to useful oral and written feedback giving pupils a good understanding about where they have achieved well and what they need to do to improve. This good quality feedback and marking is evident across all year groups and across all subjects. In the Early Years Foundation Stage detailed individual assessments, recorded in children's 'learning journals', are used successfully to plan the next steps for each child. Parents and carers are confident that the teaching of their children at the school is good, and inspection findings support this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers are unanimous that their children are safe in school and are very positive about the good standard of behaviour. In discussions, pupils say they feel free from all forms of bullying, are confident that any concerns are dealt with effectively by staff and explain that lessons are rarely disrupted as a result of bad behaviour. Inspection findings endorse pupils' views about bullying, and the school has effective procedures for dealing with any incidents that may occur. Some pupils at the school do find managing their own behaviour a challenge, but as a result of all staff using agreed behaviour management techniques with the pupils, a positive, calm and friendly atmosphere is evident. Expectations are high and all staff take collective responsibility for upholding the good behaviour of pupils at all times, with all incidents being followed through. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and can

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identify how particular lessons help them to keep themselves safe, for example when they learn about internet safety. Attendance is average but is improving strongly. A consistent approach to improving pupils' attendance is taken across this school and the local secondary school and the governing body have recently decided against giving permission for holidays in term-time, except in exceptional circumstances. The school is currently working to improve further pupils' punctuality and has already been successful in significantly improving the attendance and punctuality of a number of pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has sharpened the processes for reviewing pupils' achievement since the last inspection. This has been done by introducing highly focused pupil-progress meetings for all teachers and through more systematic moderation meetings between staff to ensure that they assess pupils' work consistently across classes. The school in recent years has been involved with a number of local and national initiatives to successfully improve the achievement of pupils. This has included advising and training other schools across the county in order for other schools to develop nurture provision. The school's curriculum is good; it is broad and balanced and meets pupils' needs well. It makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. School self-evaluation is accurate and the school improvement plan is focused on the right priorities for improvement. All staff take responsibility for the performance of the pupils in their class or group, and the high expectations from senior leadership and members of the governing body are reflected by everybody in the school. Middle and senior leaders take on key roles in the training of staff and the monitoring and evaluation of actions. Members of the governing body have monitored key initiatives carefully, challenging the school where appropriate; in addition, individual governors have provided good-quality feedback to the governing body. As a result, teaching has improved from satisfactory, at the time of the previous inspection, to good, and the school's capacity for sustained improvement is now also good. The governing body is diligent in exercising its statutory responsibilities, particularly in relation to pupils' health, safety and well-being. At the time of the inspection all safeguarding requirements were robust.

There is a strong commitment to inclusion and equality of opportunity, reflected most clearly in the sensitive care and management of all pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school is particularly successful in helping those pupils whose circumstances may cause them to be vulnerable to remove or overcome barriers to their education by providing additional support and by utilising its effective partnerships with other schools and agencies. Staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers and have provided useful workshops and advice in order to help them support their children at home, particularly with reading. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires expressed high levels of satisfaction and are very pleased with their children's experiences in school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxes Piece School, Marlow SL7 1JW

Thank you for making me very welcome and answering my questions when I visited you recently. You told me that you feel safe in school and that the staff listen to you if you have a problem. I was impressed with your good behaviour and by how kind and friendly you are to each other. You have a good understanding of what is right and wrong, and the effect that your actions have on others.

The youngest children in the school get off to a good start in Reception, where they make good progress. This is maintained throughout the school, resulting in your good achievement overall, with the oldest pupils attaining average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school. I judged that Foxes Piece is a good school. You are making more and more progress each year because the teaching is improving and because staff give extra support and lessons to any of you who need extra help. Your teachers are particularly good at making lessons interesting and enjoyable, for example, by planning activities when you make things or use your imagination.

To improve your school further, I have asked your teachers to help you to do even better in mathematics by increasing the pace of lessons when they are explaining new concepts or ideas to you, and giving you more time to practise the things you learn. I have also asked them to use some of the successful techniques from their English lessons, for example when they use the success criteria and display the work in progress on the working walls, in their mathematics lessons.

Your senior teachers keep careful records about how well you are all doing. I have asked them to improve the techniques they use, as now that the school is getting larger, better methods can be used.

You can help, too, by trying especially hard in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Angela Kirk
Lead inspector

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