

Foxford School and Community Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103732
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355444
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Elaine Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1010
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Bigham
Headteacher	Ruth Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
School address	Grange Road Coventry CV6 6BB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 35 lessons including two joint observations with senior staff; 35 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, minutes of meetings, external partners' reports, students' work in books, development planning documents, data on students' current progress and records of the school's observations of teaching. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires returned by students, staff and 116 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress of girls and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in order to assess:
- whether the curriculum is sufficiently tailored to meet individual needs
- whether teachers use a range of assessment and teaching strategies in their lessons to ensure individual needs are being met.
- The effectiveness of systems to promote good behaviour and attendance.
- How well leaders at all levels monitor provision in their areas of responsibility in order to test the capacity to continue to improve.

Information about the school

The school is a specialist arts school and has acquired trust status since the last inspection. It is of average size with a slightly smaller than average sixth form. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. An above average number of students are from minority heritage backgrounds, predominantly Indian. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average as is the proportion for whom English is an additional language. The school has received several awards including Arts Mark Gold, Healthy Schools, Investors in Careers and Investors in People.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is steadily improving the outcomes for students through improved provision and some new appointments that have strengthened leadership since the last inspection. Several aspects of the personal development of students have improved from satisfactory to good, as has the quality of teaching. In GCSE examinations in 2010, more than twice the proportion of students gained five good grades including English and mathematics compared with three years ago. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is now good.

Students are well cared for and feel safe. Attendance has improved and exclusions have fallen. Despite this, there are still a small number of lessons where students are not fully engaged with their learning, especially in Key Stage 3, which can result in off-task behaviour. The behaviour policy is not consistently applied across the school. The many different groups within the school mix harmoniously together and strong support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they make good progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced and carefully structured to ensure that it meets individual needs well. The specialist arts subjects make a strong contribution to the students' ability to reflect and use their imagination in a range of creative activities.

Good leadership of teaching, with an exemplary system to match training to individual and school needs and then measure its effectiveness, has ensured that the variability in the quality of teaching has been reduced and a growing proportion is good or better. Since the last inspection, the systems for tracking the progress that individual students make have been strengthened so that intervention when students fall behind can be accurately targeted. These systems also allow leaders to hold people to account for outcomes in their areas of responsibility more rigorously. Teachers are starting to use the information to plan lessons that build on prior learning. However, not enough attention is paid in some lessons to using assessment information to finely tune and adjust the activities to individual needs. The quality of the feedback students receive on their progress and how to improve their work remains variable, as at the last inspection. Some of the management systems are fairly new and improvements have not yet had sufficient time to increase the overall progress students make, which remains satisfactory.

The governing body provides good challenge and support for the school. They have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are good. Senior leaders are clear about areas for improvement and self evaluation is accurate, arising from regular and rigorous monitoring of provision. Leaders have ensured that all members of the school community fully support the drive for improvement. Staff morale is high, as shown by the very positive responses in the staff questionnaire. The improvements already made and the positive climate within the school indicate that good leadership gives the school good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress that all groups of students make in lessons, so that it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that teachers effectively match the level of challenge in learning to the students' prior attainment, age and ability.
- Ensure that the verbal and written feedback students receive about their learning is regular, consistent and suggests how they can make progress in their learning.
- Ensure that teachers consistently apply the school's behaviour management systems in order to maximise the students' engagement in their learning.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enter the school having attained standards that are broadly to below average. In lessons they were observed making good progress, because teachers take care to provide them with interesting activities generally matched to their ability. This was more evident in Key Stage 4 than in the lower school. In the past, boys have made less progress than they should and the school has successfully used a range of strategies to address this issue. The school is now working with the girls who, last year, made slower progress. Students who have English as an additional language make good progress because of the effective specialised support they receive. The range of special needs of students in the school has been expanding, but as a result of strong systems to guide and support these students, they make good progress. In lessons they were seen making good gains in their learning and enjoying their work.

Students told inspectors that they feel safe at school and this was endorsed by parents and carers. Students feel that bullying and racist incidents are rare and if they occur are dealt with effectively. In the majority of lessons observed behaviour was satisfactory or better. The school has taken effective action and significantly reduced exclusions. Students report that the system in place to deal with poor behaviour in lessons is effective, but it is not yet consistently applied by all staff. A significant strength is in the positive contribution that large numbers of students make to the school community and beyond. Their art work is available to the public and brightens public spaces. The various year councils and the excellent meeting of the school council, which inspectors observed, enable large numbers of students to be engaged in decision-making processes and there are numerous examples of where their suggestions have improved aspects of school life. Students develop good basic skills which prepare them well for the world of work. They are punctual to school and to lessons and develop a strong understanding of the world of work through a programme of work placements that are finely tuned to individual needs. The success of this work is evident in the very low number of students who are not in education, training or employment with training when they leave at 16. Students develop a good understanding of other faiths and cultures through the opportunities to work and interact with a wide range of faiths and cultures within the school and through contacts abroad. They develop a good ability to think creatively, supported strongly by the specialist subjects. Partnerships with organisations that support them in developing their imagination are successful and contribute greatly to their enjoyment of learning. This was

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observed in a lesson that used drama to very good effect, where a group of younger students had to imagine what it would be like to leave their homes and travel to a new country.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to devise a range of suitable activities in lessons to meet the needs and interests of learners well. Teaching assistants and other adults in lessons provide effective support for those students who have English as an additional language or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learning proceeds at a good pace in most lessons and relationships are positive. In one lesson observed during the inspection, the pace of learning was outstanding because of the high but appropriate level of challenge and the opportunities the teacher provided for students to learn by doing things for themselves. Students responded enthusiastically. In lessons where progress is less strong, teachers do not adapt their teaching sufficiently as the lesson proceeds in order to ensure that all levels of ability are suitably challenged. Assessment to support learning is satisfactory. Students are given feedback either in writing or verbally, but this is inconsistent in quality across subjects. Where assessment is most successful, it has a positive impact on progress by continually informing the students about their next steps and building their confidence. Some outstanding peer assessment was observed in a dance lesson.

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The curriculum is planned well and regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of students well. There is a range of courses suitable for all levels of ability. The offer is enhanced through good partnership links with other schools and organisations. There is a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which are varied and enjoyed by a large number of students. Many of these contribute well to the students' personal and social development.

Students are supported well at all transition points as they move into and through the school. There is a very effective system in place to monitor behaviour and learning mentors support students' emotional needs well. The school works very effectively with a wide range of external agencies to support the welfare of all students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders in the school have the confidence of parents, students and staff and are successfully driving up standards for all students. They have steadily increased the level of challenge in targets for student outcomes as attainment has risen. Expectations are high for all groups. Regular monitoring activities feed into challenging discussions between senior and middle leaders. These are informed by a wide range of information including the views of students, some of whom help with lesson observations and contribute to an understanding of effective learning. A particular strength is the way that information from lesson observations on the different facets of good teaching are analysed in order to inform training activities for all staff and for individuals. There is further analysis done following training to measure the impact. This is steadily providing leaders with a very accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and improving outcomes. The governing body has a very clear understanding of the work of the school and can demonstrate examples of where its members have challenged and improved practice. Parents and carers are regularly informed about their children's progress and appreciate the communications they receive from the school. Students from a wide range of different faiths and cultures mix happily together and care is taken to ensure the provision is adapted to meet individual needs. The school identifies groups who are making slower progress, or participating less well in activities outside the school day and puts in place strategies to address the problem. This has been successful in improving the performance of boys and no groups now underachieve. Rigorous safeguarding procedures, regularly monitored by senior staff and the governing body, ensure that all are safe and there are very strong systems in place for the most vulnerable students. The school has a very clear understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic context in which it works. Links with the community through the headteacher's attendance at all neighbourhood forum

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meetings and the use of local community surveys strengthen that understanding. Links with schools abroad, for example in Uganda, are developing the global context. The specialism is a particular strength in supporting this aspect both through work in primary schools and through performances at public events. Relationships are particularly harmonious.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Outcomes in the sixth form are improving and current data from the school shows they are now good. There are some exceptionally positive individual case studies where young people have started from a very low point in the main school and progressed to degree courses at university. Retention rates are good and value-added measures show that students make good progress. Almost three quarters of students continue into higher education. The students are very positive about their experience and the contribution they make to the work of the school, as student support workers and by helping to run the year councils, is outstanding. They are valuable ambassadors for the school and excellent role models for younger students.

The provision is good, with good teaching, a wide and varied curriculum and very good personal support. Teachers systematically guide students to be independent learners with good organisational skills. There are good facilities for private study and research. The enrichment programme covers a wide range of useful opportunities, such as how to eat well at University or individually arranged work placements. An annual visit to Aberystwyth University is regarded highly by students. A weaker aspect of the curriculum is the teaching of AS and A2 courses in the same classes in some subjects.

Leaders evaluate the outcomes in the sixth form and monitor provision effectively, resulting in improving achievement and high levels of satisfaction. Productive links have

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been forged across the federation of schools to ensure as wide a range of subject options as possible. The monitoring of provision elsewhere has ensured students are completely happy that it is of an equally good quality.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The response to the questionnaire was low. The parents and carers who responded expressed high levels of satisfaction with how well the school keeps their children safe and how well they are kept informed. They were least happy with the way behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors found that the behaviour policy is not consistently applied by all staff and have made this one of the recommendations of this inspection report. Parents are very happy with the progress their children are making and a significantly high proportion say that their children enjoy school. When they have concerns, they are happy that the school deals with them effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxford School and Community Arts College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1010 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	34	71	61	4	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	35	30	77	66	2	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	37	68	59	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	33	68	59	5	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	23	20	81	70	7	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	21	72	62	14	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	16	75	65	18	16	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	26	22	78	67	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	17	81	70	9	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	20	67	58	17	15	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	17	70	60	14	12	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	21	18	83	72	3	3	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	29	75	65	3	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



26 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Foxford School and Community Arts College, Coventry, CV6 6BB

On behalf of myself and the other inspectors, I want to thank you all for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school and those of you who filled in a questionnaire whose views helped us to find out about the school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons, meetings and at breaks. This letter is to tell you what we found on our inspection.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education and is improving steadily. In lessons most of you behave well, concentrate and try hard. Your attendance is also improving. You told us that you feel safe at school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. You get on very well together and there is a strong sense of community in the school. The school's specialist subjects in creative arts provide you with lots of useful and interesting opportunities. Many of you make a good contribution to improving the school through the student councils. Those of you in the sixth form make an excellent contribution and are really good role models for other students. Teaching is good overall and some is very good. The school's leaders check carefully how well you are all progressing and plan well how to improve. We believe they have good capacity to improve things further with your help. To help the school improve further, we have recommended the following.

Teachers should plan activities to match your differing needs and abilities and set the level of challenge in lessons to make sure you can all make good or better progress.

Teachers should use their comments and feedback on your work more consistently to help you know what you need to do to improve. You can help by asking if you are unsure.

All adults in the school should apply the behaviour policy consistently so that those of you whose behaviour is sometimes not good do not disturb the learning of others. The part you must play in this is obvious.

I am confident that your school will continue to improve. I wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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