

Foresters Primary School

Redford Avenue, Wallington, SM6 9DP

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. From below-average starting points they make good progress and leave school with results that are broadly average.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give the children a happy and settled start to their education, where they learn quickly.
- The school welcomes all. Pupils who need it receive tailor-made additional support to suit their individual needs, while pupils on the autistic spectrum in the Foresters Opportunity Base (FOB) are encouraged to integrate with others wherever possible.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is strong, encouraging all to respect one another and get on well together.
- Pupils' overall behaviour is good. Those who occasionally find it difficult to deal with their emotions are supported sensitively in the nurture group.
- The quality of teaching is good, enabling most pupils to make strong progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work well, ensuring that they understand what they need to do to improve.
- Reading is a strength of the school, and pupils talk enthusiastically of their enjoyment of books.
- Effective school leaders have secured improvements since the previous inspection. They have successfully raised the quality of teaching by focusing closely on how well pupils are learning and providing effective support where it is needed. As a result, pupils' learning and progress have improved and are now good, and attendance, too, has improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is predominantly good and occasionally outstanding there are pockets of teaching in which pupils learn more slowly.
- In these cases teachers tend to take over too much, preventing pupils from finding things out for themselves, so that they sometimes lose concentration.
- Pupils do a little less well in writing than they do in reading and mathematics. This is because they do not always have enough practice in writing across a range of topics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, taught by 12 class teachers, across a range of subjects, most being observed jointly with the headteacher or his deputy.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at samples of their work and attended assemblies.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and teachers with responsibilities for specific subjects, members of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the views of staff in 47 questionnaires.
- There were 29 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors used these and 10 written comments they received, also speaking to several parents during the course of the inspection, in person and by telephone.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including development plans, the self-evaluation report, local authority evaluation reports, the data on pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding information, records relating to behaviour and safety, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

Inspection team

Natalia Power, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Michael Buist	Additional inspector
David Lewis	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Foresters is an average-sized primary school. There is one class in every year group from Nursery to Year 6 and, in addition, there are four classes for up to 42 pupils on the autistic spectrum. These four classes make up a specially resourced provision, the Foresters Opportunity Base (FOB), which comes under the governing body's management.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is much higher than the national average.
- Around two pupils out of five come from a wide range of minority ethnic heritages, a proportion that is a little higher than usual. Around a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, a slightly higher proportion than average; however, few pupils are at an early stage of learning the language.
- Because of the significant number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs in FOB, the proportion on the special needs register at school action plus and with statements of special educational needs is considerably higher than usual. The proportion of pupils on the special needs register at school action is lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Teachers should make sure at all times that they:
 - keep up a brisk pace of learning so that pupils do not spend too long sitting listening to the teacher
 - encourage pupils as much as possible to do their own research and find things out for themselves.
- Encourage pupils to do as well as possible in writing by providing them with more opportunities to develop their writing skills across a range of topics, not just in English lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. From starting points which are generally below average they leave school with broadly average results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 6.
- Inspection evidence, obtained from observing lessons, looking at samples of pupils' work and talking to pupils and parents shows a general pattern of strong progress. National and school achievement data support this.
- Pupils do particularly well in reading because the school uses an effective system for teaching them sounds and letters and how they come together to form words. Because of this careful grounding, by the time they leave Year 6 they are reading as well or better than pupils in most other schools. The school fosters in them a love of reading, and they enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Children enter the Nursery and Reception years with language, number and social skills which vary but which are generally below the levels expected for their age. Through careful teaching and inviting activities they learn well in their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils continue to do well from Year 1 to Year 6. The school goes to considerable lengths to provide support for pupils in danger of falling behind so all are able to make progress. The school uses the open-plan areas particularly well to provide flexible groupings, so that pupils receive individual support. This support is continually reviewed to ensure that pupils receive the right help for them. As a result of this individual attention, all groups of pupils make strong progress, with no group falling behind.
- Although pupils are generally prepared well for the next stage of schooling, they do a little less well in writing than in reading or mathematics. This is because the school does not ensure that pupils have enough chances to write at length in subjects other than English. As a result, pupils do not always have the chance to practise writing in a range of styles and on a variety of topics, and achievement is lower.
- Pupils with a range of additional needs, including those in FOB, make good progress. Pupils in FOB are integrated into mainstream classes where possible and all benefit from the school's commitment to equality for all.
- The additional money from the pupil premium is used well to provide extra support within the classroom or in small groups; this enables the pupils for whom the premium is paid to do as well, and sometimes much better, than their counterparts in the country as a whole.
- Pupils from a wide range of ethnic minority heritages, some of whom speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to others because their needs are identified early and effective support put in place.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers generally expect a good deal from their pupils and this is reflected in the overall strong progress they make in their learning.
- Most lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils are busy throughout. In one fast-paced Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils counted backwards in fours but had to alternate between saying the number out loud and keeping quiet. This ensured that all of them concentrated hard and learned quickly.
- Occasionally lessons are too slow, particularly when the teacher does too much of the talking. This prevents the pupils from learning for themselves through doing rather than listening.
- Teachers ensure through effective questioning that pupils have as many chances as possible to speak and be heard in the classroom. This focus on speaking and listening skills begins early in the Nursery and Reception classes, where the adults ask the children questions that require more than a 'yes' or 'no' response.

- Tasks set by the teachers usually have a good element of challenge, matched well to their abilities, so that pupils are encouraged to aim high. For example, in one lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils in FOB, pupils were encouraged to handle and remember the weights of various wrapped parcels. They learned that smaller packages could be heavier than larger ones and were encouraged to learn effectively through exploration and through using their memory.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, helping them individually and in small groups, and working in effective partnership with the class teachers. This enables pupils with a range of additional needs to make progress in line with others.
- Teachers mark pupils' books consistently well, ensuring that they understand clearly the next steps they need to take to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils show their love of the school through their attendance, which has been rising from low levels in previous years and is now above average.
- Pupils have positive attitudes in the classroom and are eager to learn. Occasionally, if they are kept sitting for too long listening to the teacher, they become a little restless but generally behaviour is good.
- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes are encouraged to listen to one another and celebrate one another's achievements, and this helps them to socialise and get on well with one another.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, and as a result pupils respect one another and get on very well together. The school is highly inclusive. One parent accurately described it as 'a happy school at the heart of the community'.
- Pupils feel safe at the school and understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, in assembly a teacher told the story of Little Red Riding Hood in a lively and spirited way and used the story to warn children of dangers from the 'big bad wolf'. In this way dangers such as internet danger and risks of talking to strangers were sensitively conveyed.
- Pupils told inspectors that there was no bullying at the school. However, a few parents told inspectors of concerns about individual pupils bullying their children or using bad language. Inspectors explored each of these cases with the school and received evidence that each incident had been effectively dealt with and that all the parents concerned had been fully involved.
- The nurture group, set up to help the handful of pupils who have difficulties with their behaviour and emotions, provides them with sensitive and effective support. As a result, these pupils feel supported and their behaviour has improved.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is popular with parents and pupils, one of whom described him as 'a really kind man who always listens'. He is ambitious for the school and, under his leadership, its overall effectiveness has risen from satisfactory to good. His deputy provides able support. The staff are very positive about the school and its management.
- Leaders, managers and governors work well together to improve the school. Equal opportunities are an important priority, and they have created a school in which pupils with a range of needs and from a variety of backgrounds get on well together and have the same chance to succeed.
- The school carries out regular and effective reviews of its performance, enabling it to plan well for future improvements.
- The valuable support the school receives from the local authority is appreciated and has helped the school to move forward.
- The school has successfully addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection, so that,

for example, pupils' attainment has risen, and work is now accurately pitched at the right level for each pupil. The effectiveness of leadership, including governance, the commitment of staff and rising standards point to a good capacity for continued improvement.

- The leadership monitors the quality of the teaching well, focusing principally on how pupils learn. As a result, pupils are helped to make good progress and the school ensures good value for money from their teachers.
- The school keeps pupils safe and ensures that those who work with them have been properly checked.
- The school offers pupils a good range of experiences beyond the classroom, including many exciting outings, clubs and activities. For example, pupils reported that they enjoy using the trim trail in the playground and gardening is a popular activity.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The experienced governing body takes an active interest in the school and works supportively with school leaders and staff. It is kept well informed about how pupils are doing through detailed headteacher's reports, and governors are trained in understanding information about school performance. The governing body has a good understanding of how well teachers and support staff are performing and set challenging targets for school leaders. Not all governors are actively involved in the procedures to ensure that the best teachers are appropriately rewarded. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors ask searching questions about how well pupils perform compared to those in other schools. They fully understand how the pupil premium is used, ensuring it benefits those for whom it is intended, for example to provide small group teaching and additional support such as the effective Every Child a Reader programme. Governors are well trained, attending, for example, courses on safer recruitment and child protection. They carry out their statutory duties, including ensuring equality of opportunities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	102986
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	404849

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Kirkwood
Headteacher	Havard Spring
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2011
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