

Fosse Primary School

Balfour Street, , Leicester, LE3 5EA

Inspection dates 20-21 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement is not as good in reading and writing as it is in mathematics.
- When teaching literacy skills in lessons other than English, teachers do not always make clear precisely what pupils need to learn.
- Teaching does not ensure that pupils make consistently good progress throughout the school and not enough pupils make more than the progress expected of them.
- Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to stretch the more able pupils and help them to learn more independently; this means they do not always reach the levels they are capable of.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not clear enough, especially with regard to how pupils' achievement will increase.
- Some management roles are temporary and this means that extra work overseeing additional areas of work has to be undertaken by senior leaders.

The school has the following strengths

- The youngest children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics has improved well over the past year because of the way the school has changed pupils' attitudes to the subject.
- Support for pupils new to the school is good, especially for those newly arrived from other countries, which means they get off to a good start with improving English.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe and enjoy school.
- The headteacher has successfully concentrated on improving teaching and developing the skills of other managers; the checks made on lessons are rigorous and have led to better teaching.
- The shadow governing body monitors and supports the work of the school effectively.
- The support for pupils who need extra help with reading, managing behaviour, and speaking and listening is good and results in them improving their skills well.

Information about this inspection

- Twenty one lessons or part lessons were visited, including some sessions where small groups were taught.
- The inspection team looked at a range of the school's documents including the school improvement plan and policies about how the school keeps pupils safe. The team also examined the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors met with the school leaders, staff, governors, the Chair of the Shadow Governing Body and an officer of the local authority.
- Thirteen parents expressed their views through the Parent View Website and their responses were examined. Inspectors also spoke to parents on the school site and examined the school's own survey of parents and carers.
- The views expressed in questionnaires returned by members of the school staff were also considered.

Inspection team

George Derby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Oynon

Additional Inspector

Jillian Fury

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The number of pupils on the school's roll is larger than most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school throughout the school year is very high and is increasing. For instance, in Year 6 this year around a third of pupils were not present in the school when the group was in Year 2. Twenty eight languages are spoken by pupils. The number of pupils entering the school from Eastern European countries is increasing.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is extra government funding provided to the school, is much higher than in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at 'school action' is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at 'school action plus' or have a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- No pupils attend any alternative form of education away from the school site.
- Over the last 12 months, there has been a number of staff changes and vacancies which has resulted in some key areas of the school being led directly by the leadership team. Two new teachers have recently joined the school as well as four teaching assistants.
- The school has had an Interim Executive Board in the past overseeing the school's work. There is now a small shadow governing body. In September 2013 there will be a full governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring all teachers:
 - provide more able pupils with activities which help them reach a higher level of understanding, make them think for themselves and tackle work independently
 - focus on the key learning points pupils are meant to learn in lessons and not just on whether they complete their work
 - maintain a good pace of learning in lessons through regular assessment and probing questioning to keep pupils fully concentrating on their work
 - make full and effective use of the adults who work alongside the teachers.
- Improve pupils' skills in reading and writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their reading and writing skills in other subjects, ensuring these are tailored precisely to their capabilities and what they need to learn
 - extending the work designed to improve pupils' achievement, attitudes and motivation, which has already been successfully introduced in mathematics, to English.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that school improvement planning explicitly sets out clear actions, detailed timescales and clear and measurable targets against which success can be gauged
 - allocating the roles and responsibilities of managers where there are temporary positions so that senior leaders can focus their time fully on the school's key priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Improvements to teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage are paying dividends and children are now making good progress. However, achievement requires improvement overall because this good progress is not sustained consistently throughout the rest of the school.
- Pupils' progress is improving and all groups are now making at least the progress expected of them. Some make faster progress, although not enough for pupils' progress to be judged good. These improvements, most notably in mathematics, reflect the work the school has done in improving pupils' attitudes through the training that has been undertaken. It now intends to extend this to English.
- Pupils generally do better in mathematics than they do in reading and writing. Much has been done to improve pupils' English skills by providing greater opportunities for them to read, produce longer pieces of writing and to write in other subjects. However, these opportunities are not always consistently well matched to what individuals, often with very different abilities, need.
- The progress made by more able pupils varies and some do not reach the levels they should. This is improving because the work they are given is better matched to their skills and abilities but their ability to think, plan, investigate and solve problems on their own is under-developed.
- The support given to pupils who enter the school with little or no English is good and they make good progress in learning the language. Their skills in mathematics also improve well; depending on when they enter the school, their attainment in English occasionally lags behind others.
- The levels that pupils reach vary considerably each year because so many pupils join or leave the school. Those pupils who stay at the school from Year 2 through to Year 6 reach levels approaching those typically found in primary schools. However, the overall picture for all pupils is one of below average attainment in both Year 2 and Year 6. In some past years attainment has been low.
- The pupils supported by the extra money from the pupil premium made expected progress in English; in mathematics they did a lot better than this group nationally. The gap is closing, although last year, the attainment of those supported by the extra money was two terms behind other pupils in both subjects. The money was used to fund the training of staff in reading and writing, nurture and mentoring training. It also provided small class sizes and time for those who need extra help with reading.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving in line with that typically made by other pupils. Targeted support for groups who need specific additional help, such as through reading recovery, nurture sessions (in 'The Island') to help improve behaviour and personal development, and for improving language skills, has resulted in some of these pupils making good progress.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The teaching is good in some parts of the school and in some classes; in others it requires improvement.

- The good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures the children settle quickly into the routines of school life. The teaching of letters and sounds is now beginning to lay a secure foundation for their later reading.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject have resulted in pupils now starting to learn well. Opportunities are also provided regularly for pupils to improve their literacy skills. However, the activities to develop these skills in lessons other than English, are not based sufficiently on their capability in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- Pupils who need extra help in lessons usually have work simplified and set out in small steps. They are often supported suitably by teaching assistants who explain things to them and check that they understand what they are doing. Occasionally, assistants do not provide enough opportunities to support other learners in lessons. More able pupils have harder work, although it is of a similar type to other pupils. Staff rarely set different tasks to develop their capabilities fully to a higher level.
- The mostly good marking and the regular checks, through probing questioning for example, of how well pupils have done is raising attainment and improving progress. The helpful comments in pupils' books aid pupils to focus on what they need to do next. These form their personal targets which they know and diligently try to reach.
- The 'steps to success' (the statements by which pupils know they have successfully completed a piece of work) are helpful. However, some pupils take little account of these during the lesson and are not reminded to do so. This means that they are missing out on developing the skills needed to be fully independent learners.
- In many lessons pupils work productively. Lively teaching, where activities are changed regularly, pupils are frequently asked questions to make them think hard, and interesting ways of helping them remember things, keeps pupils on their toes. In a mathematics lesson, pupils in a Year 3 and 4 class came to life when asked to remember and use a mnemonic to remember the steps in solving a word problem; in an English lesson they also used this approach to remember their 'Super Heroes' such as 'Dr Punctuation' and 'Captain Connective' to improve a piece of writing.
- In a few lessons, the pace of the lessons is laboured and teachers focus on the completion of the activity and not sufficiently on what and how well pupils are learning. A few pupils lose concentration because of this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy school. They take a great pride in it and say 'no one gets left out'. They enthusiastically respond to questions and contribute ideas in lessons. Around the playground and school corridors they act sensibly. They form good relationships and go the extra mile to help one another.
 - In Nursery and Reception children usually settle well into the routines of school life and begin to share with others. They behave well and start to listen more carefully when asked to do so.
 - Although a few parents and carers think that pupils do not behave well and difficult behaviour is not tackled effectively, there are few instances of poor behaviour. The school supports the small
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number of pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties well and their behaviour improves significantly during their time in the school. A number of such pupils benefit greatly from the 'Island'. There were four fixed term exclusions last year.

- The school is very proud of its anti-bullying award. Bullying is rare, is not tolerated and any occurrences are dealt with immediately. The anti-bullying 'ambassador' pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. Discussions with pupils indicate that name-calling sometimes occurs but is rare, and is not linked to race or culture. Pupils like the range of awards they get for working hard and behaving well.
- The school has done much to improve attendance over past years and this is now close to the national average. Rigorous measures are applied to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and that holidays are not taken in term time. A few parents do not always bring their children to school each day, or on time, as they should. The school has a good range of ways of taking action in such situations, and works very closely with the education welfare officer.
- Pupils feel safe and like the support they get when they need help. Newcomers to the school are actively welcomed and quickly included in school life by both staff and pupils. There is great interest by pupils in the backgrounds and cultures of others. The school safeguards its pupils well. It works closely with families and notifies the appropriate authorities immediately should any pupil leave unexpectedly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and senior staff are working hard to improve the school's work. They benefit from the good support provided by the local authority. Changes to the staffing and management of areas of the school's work, with a sharper focus on improving teaching, are making a difference. Middle leaders are more effective in checking on their areas of responsibility and the quality of teaching.
- A small number of temporary management positions are in place. The members of the relatively small senior team oversee the work of these different areas, in addition to their own key responsibilities. This means they are too stretched and not always able to discharge these responsibilities effectively. The headteacher and governors have plans to address this and to put permanent leaders for these additional areas in place.
- In practical terms, leaders do the right things to improve the school's work. Written development planning, though, is too short term. Actions are not always focused on achievement and are not precise enough about the improvement to be made. Some contain detail which should be part of other managers' plans. The school's 'Outline plan for the future' broadly identifies the key things to do but is far from being finalised.
- The teachers' appraisal targets are linked precisely to the need for the pupils to make more progress than expected to raise their attainment further. The headteacher regularly checks the quality of teaching, and uses the progress made by pupils in each class to determine whether governors should be asked to approve an improvement in a teacher's salary.
- Leaders and managers make careful use of the pupil premium money to bring about improvement. This is carefully monitored by the governing body so that pupils overcome barriers to learning. The impact is evident in the narrowing gap and the accelerated progress in mathematics.

- The school use a broad range of topics to make learning interesting in a range of subjects. Pupils say they find the work interesting and participate in a good range of sports. The school provides a wide range of clubs and out-of-school activities. Pupils appreciate and value the trips and visits that bring learning to life.

 - The governance of the school:
 - The Chair of the Shadow Governing Body is very knowledgeable about the school's work and the challenges it faces. As a regular visitor to the school, she reviews regularly with the headteacher and senior staff the quality of teaching, data about pupils' progress showing how it compares with other schools and other issues, such as staffing or the budget. Governors fully understand how funding, particularly the new pupil premium funding, is used and what impact it is having. No stone goes unturned by the well trained and mostly experienced governors when they question the school about the improvements being made. They are fully aware of how pay awards can be made based on meeting progress targets, and understand well how these are set for teachers.
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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	120089
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	405910

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	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Sutcliffe
Headteacher	Richard Stone
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2011
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