

Foxhills Infant School

Foxhills, Colbury, Southampton, SO40 7ED

Inspection dates 23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained steadily above average since the previous inspection.
- Since her appointment the new headteacher has rigorously used information about pupils' performance to highlight accurately areas where attainment could improve further.
- Teachers have updated their skills in teaching writing and mathematics and as a result teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding.
- All groups of pupils make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress because of excellent provision.
- The school's values, some of which are to be caring, friendly and hard working, are shared with pupils daily. They underpin the mutual respect and excellent relationships that exist throughout the school. This supports pupils' learning and development very well.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, are keen to come and attend very regularly. They are polite and well behaved in lessons and get on very well together at playtimes. They feel very safe and well cared for. Parents fully support this view.
- The new headteacher's very strong drive and visionary approach, the reorganisation of some leadership positions and an emphasis on developing all adults are resulting in an effective, well-prepared and ambitious staff team.
- Since the previous inspection governors have improved their skills significantly. They are now well informed and able to check the school's work and challenge it to develop further.
- Excellent partnerships with other schools and agencies, especially the junior school on the site, enhance pupils' learning particularly well.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. It is reinforced by the school's commitment to teaching thinking skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers have not yet developed all the skills they need to help pupils learn more rapidly.
- In some lessons tasks are not challenging enough so pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 15 lessons, observing 10 teachers across the school along with a number of teaching assistants working with small groups of pupils. They also talked to pupils about their work and heard individual pupils read from Years 1 and 2 as well as others in lessons.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including pupils' work, systems for checking progress, records relating to behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement, records of monitoring the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, school staff and groups of pupils. Individual pupils were spoken to in lessons and around the school. A telephone call took place with the Lead Learning Partner from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 33 members of staff were analysed. The inspectors took account of the views expressed in 75 online responses from Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to a significant number of parents during informal meetings before school and took into account two letters and two telephone calls from parents.

Inspection team

Anna Sketchley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Ridding

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Foxhills is an average-sized infant school. Most pupils attend from the surrounding area.
- All pupils in the infant school are taught in single-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services, is below average.
- The number of pupils from ethnic minority groups is below average. No pupils are in the very early stages of learning English.
- There are breakfast and after-school clubs on site run by a private company.
- There is also a privately run pre-school on site which did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils reach the highest standards they can and make the best possible progress by:
 - using the existing examples of outstanding practice to continue to improve teachers' skills in teaching writing and calculation
 - giving pupils challenging tasks that stretch them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's levels of knowledge and skills when they join the school vary from year to year. Usually they are below that typical for their age. Teachers plan and teach effectively across all seven areas of learning and all groups of children make good progress. By the end of Reception children are in line with, and in some areas exceed, the nationally expected level of development.
- Relationships in Reception between adults and children are strong enabling children to become confident in choosing their own learning activities. When learning to count with giant dominoes in the outside area they showed great perseverance.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are taught well so that by the end of Year 1 attainment in the national screening check is above average. Pupils in Year 1 were observed joining well-formed letters to make words containing the sound 'ow'. More-able children were challenged well and succeeded in writing their words in a sentence.
- The school attaches much importance to every child being able to read well. Pupils are encouraged to join the local library and some talk about their enjoyment of the 'summer reading challenge'. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics very well to help them read unfamiliar words. They know the difference between non-fiction and fiction and discuss books and authors they enjoy. By Year 2 many have become more-able readers and are reading at a level above expectation with fluency and great expression.
- Key Stage 1 results since the previous inspection show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained steadily above average and sometimes high. However, attainment has not always kept pace with national increases year on year so the gap has been slowly narrowing. In the past more-able pupils, in particular, have not always reached the high standard of which they are capable. This is because tasks are sometimes too easy. Over the last year developments in teaching have begun to improve pupils' achievement more rapidly, especially in writing. Teachers have very successfully updated their skills for teaching writing and developed a very clear policy for teaching number.
- This was particularly noticeable from progress made in the lessons observed during the inspection and most especially in the scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards in the current Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are high.
- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are extremely well supported and provided for by both teachers and highly skilled teaching assistants. As a result they make very good progress and reach standards that are above those in the same group nationally.
- The gap in attainment between those who receive pupil-premium funding and all other pupils is reducing over time. School information shows that pupils currently receiving funding are on track to reach standards that are similar to those expected nationally for all Year 2 pupils. They are making the same good progress as all other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are well organised with appropriate and good quality resources. They begin promptly, are interesting and engage pupils quickly so that no time is wasted and pupils are ready to learn.
- The use of the interactive whiteboard and characters like 'Beaky' the puppet, who had been looking at pupils' books, immediately gains pupils' attention at the start of lessons.
- At the beginning of a successful lesson the teacher recapped very thoroughly on previous learning about how to write a report. This set the scene very well for the new learning. Pupils were secure in what they were being asked to do, were given a way of measuring for themselves whether or not they had completed the task correctly and consequently made very rapid progress.

- Teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to ask carefully focused questions, skilfully checking pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses.
- Staff plan effectively across subjects so that pupils have good opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The marking of pupils' work and how they can improve were issues at the previous inspection. Teachers' marking, and pupils' response to it, is now excellent. Pupils are very clear about how they can improve their work and take working towards their targets seriously.
- The small proportion of outstanding teaching is not shared sufficiently with all teachers. This is slowing down efforts to secure outstanding teaching throughout the school. In some lessons tasks are either too easy or too hard so pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers have high expectations of both work and behaviour. Pupils' books are exceptionally neat and well presented and show that pupils take a great pride in their work.
- Teachers contribute significantly to the development of pupils' thinking and social skills by providing them with opportunities to work together and share and discuss ideas.
- The quality of teaching in Reception is good. Routines are well established and activities are planned carefully so that there is a good balance between those chosen by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Classrooms are exceptionally well organised and wall displays contain a wide variety of resources that support learning.
- Teaching assistants are used productively to support the learning of different groups of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Records show that exclusions are rare. There are very few incidents of challenging behaviour. Where it does occur it is very well managed. The views of pupils, parents and other adults support this view.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of sanctions and rewards for behaviour. The school's commitment to developing a philosophical 'thinking' approach to life in general helps pupils to understand and uphold the school's values.
- During the inspection, behaviour observed in the playground and in assembly, and particularly in the dining room, was very good.
- Pupils are eager to help, for example by serving on the school council, being involved in writing the new school newsletter, or being 'Playground Pals'.
- They say lessons are fun and school is 'awesome!' They show this by their very good attendance which has improved markedly during the last year, especially for some groups of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. This view was fully supported by parents in Parent View. Pupils benefit from the school's high-profile approach to anti-bullying and teaching about how to keep safe. They know exactly who to go to if they are in trouble and can discuss very clearly the rules for keeping safe on the internet and when out and about. They say there is no bullying in school and this view is supported by parents and other adults.
- Because pupils get on so well together this makes a considerable contribution to their safety and the development of their personal and social skills as well as the good progress they make.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because occasionally, there is some low-level disruption in lessons from a small minority of pupils who are not engaged in the task they have been given, especially when it is not at the right level for them.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has shown exceptional skills in school improvement. She has developed a 'no excuse' culture, has very high expectations and is ambitious to raise standards further and secure outstanding achievement for all pupils.
- Her passionate and infectious drive, together with the newly formed senior leadership team and

the challenge now provided by governors, has built a strong whole-school team fully committed to improvement.

- Rigorous analysis of pupils' performance and very effective checking of the quality of teaching have produced the correct priorities to move the school to become outstanding.
- Teachers' performance has been rigorously assessed using the national 'Teachers' Standards' and an intensive programme of training has been carried out to meet their needs.
- The successful impact of updated teaching skills in number and writing is already evident in pupils' improved attainment this year.
- Well-informed subject leaders are playing a leading role in raising achievement, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. They check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their areas and plan and implement initiatives to improve achievement.
- The Early Years manager is new to post but is being ably supported and helped to develop the necessary skills by the expertise of the senior leadership team.
- Over recent years the school has maintained good achievement for all pupils but is now showing the capacity to improve on this.
- In addition to the successful initiatives to raise standards in writing and calculation, the whole school curriculum has been under review. The school has thoroughly overhauled all topics to take into account the content requirements of the new National Curriculum. At the same time it is committed to offering challenging and exciting opportunities that engage pupils through initiatives such as the New Forest Schools Partnership and teaching thinking skills.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by the rich and stimulating experiences of visits, visitors and after-school clubs, especially sports. New primary school sports funding has been used to buy skilled sports coaching, training materials and equipment. As a result pupils are learning and enjoying a wider range of sports both in school and at before- and after-school activities. This is helping to improve pupils' physical skills and their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Both music and sport are strengths in the school's curriculum.
- Strong partnerships with local schools, especially the growing link with the junior school on site, the local community and external agencies, all support the learning and development of pupils exceptionally well. The local authority offers the school a very light touch monitoring approach. Recently the Lead Learning Partner has observed teaching and agreed judgements with the school.
- Equal opportunities for different groups of pupils are promoted very well and the school does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and the school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed rigorously.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring considerable and varied skills from the world of work and supplement this by regularly attending appropriate training courses. They have good procedures to check the work of the school closely through the school improvement committee, analysing data and links with subject leaders. As a consequence, governors are now more knowledgeable about the school's performance. This is an important improvement since the previous inspection and helps governors to ask searching questions and challenge decisions and outcomes. Governors are well informed about the spending of the pupil premium and sports funding and can discuss the impact of these initiatives. They set very rigorous objectives for the headteacher's performance and review them robustly. Governors have received comprehensive information about teachers' performance, pay and progression and carry out all their statutory duties diligently.

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	116024
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	431404

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Douglas Wright
Headteacher	Ruth Linsley
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 June 2009
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