

Foxdell Infant School

Dallow Road, Luton, LU1 1TG

Inspection dates 15–16 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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 make good progress from often well below expected starting points. Since the last inspection the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress has improved and is now above average, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Almost all teaching is at least good. Where it is best, teachers create a stimulating and purposeful learning environment which supports pupils to learn quickly.
- The school has a strong and effective headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, a good team of senior leaders and governors who share a clear focus on raising standards for all pupils.
- Literacy and mathematics subject leaders guide improvement well in their subjects and also support colleagues to improve their own teaching skills.
- Pupils are polite and well behaved in lessons, around school and at playtimes. Pupils settle quickly to their work. They have a joy and an excitement for their learning. They understand what they need to do to improve and they want to get better.
- Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the academic progress that their children make. Parents come into school to learn alongside their children and there is an increasing number who are happy to come into school to support with enrichment activities such as trips.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in some classes is more variable because teaching is not consistently good, particularly when assessment information is not used well enough to set challenging targets, including for the more able pupils.
- There remain weaknesses in pupils' literacy. Handwriting is not good, and some pupils have limited comprehension of what they are reading, even when they read fluently.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always receive the support they need to understand and use new and unfamiliar words or to write more complex sentences.
- Teachers' marking, while regular, does not always precisely identify pupils' next steps in learning and pupils do not always get chances to learn from their teachers' comments.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 16 lessons. Many were joint observations undertaken with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- They looked at the work in pupils' books, listened to a sample of pupils read in Years 1 and 2, and held discussions with pupils about their learning and experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority representative.
- They looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the local authority evaluation report, the school improvement plan and data relating to pupils' progress.
- There were insufficient responses on the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) for inspectors to take these into account. However, they held informal discussions with parents on the playground and took note of other parental views.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Samantha Stewart, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Prue Rayner

Her Majesty's Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Foxdell Infant School is a larger-than-average sized infant school. It has three classes in each year group.
- The school was inspected in April 2013 and was graded as requires improvement. The school was monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors and a visit was made in June 2013.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups and most speak English as an additional language. There is an increasing number of new arrivals from Eastern Europe who speak little or no English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is in line with the national average.
- There is on-site childcare, including the Fox Cubs Nursery, provided in a children's centre. This is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately.
- During the last two years there have been a number of acting headteachers and other changes in staffing. A number of teachers in posts of responsibility are newly appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress to ensure that attainment reaches and exceeds national averages by:
 - making sure that pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are systematically taught new vocabulary to improve their reading comprehension
 - ensuring systems of assessment and tracking are used effectively across the school
 - improving pupils' handwriting so that it is more systematically developed throughout the school, ensuring pupils develop a more joined-up style of writing.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - effectively managing the enthusiasm of pupils so that the pace of learning does not slacken
 - setting suitably difficult work for the more able pupils in all lessons
 - developing marking in all subjects to guide pupils' next steps to learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, the achievement of pupils has improved. The pupils' good progress in Key Stage 1 is particularly noticeable in Year 2 where progress in reading, writing and especially mathematics has been swiftly improved. This ensures that most pupils are now attaining levels which are in line with other pupils of their age.
- Almost all pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. They make good progress in acquiring and using key skills because teaching is well planned to meet their learning needs. Despite this good progress, fewer pupils than nationally have reached the expected overall standards by the time they start Key Stage 1 because their comprehension and vocabulary skills limit progress.
- The most able pupils achieve well across the school, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson the most able pupils were using more complex numbers, and had been challenged with the inverse of multiplication and division rather than simply addition and subtraction. Assessment information shows that the progress of these pupils is exceeding that of most pupils of their age.
- Improved assessment and tracking underpin the pupils' good progress. Teachers use a wide range of information to check that pupils are making the progress expected, and to specifically target the learning needs of different groups. However, pupil tracking is not equally meticulous throughout the school, and occasionally slower progress is not spotted quickly enough.
- Pupils who are supported by additional government funding make good progress and are achieving at the same rate as other pupils in the school. As they move through the school the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates narrows. Additional funding has been used wisely to enhance and enrich the learning for these pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points. This is because the school has worked hard to ensure that they have targeted support and clear objectives to improve their learning. The special educational needs coordinator cares passionately about making sure that these pupils have positive life chances and are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make and many can use more complex sounds to read more difficult words. Results at the end of the Year 1 screening check in phonics (sounds that letters make) have improved and to be broadly in line with national standards. Effective targeting of support for pupils who did not achieve expected standards at the end of Year 1 has improved outcomes at the end of Year 2.
- The focus on improving reading skills has raised standards. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to read with fluency, expression and understanding and clearly enjoy their reading. They have the skill and confidence to tackle unfamiliar words, and also understand how to apply punctuation to make sense of what they read.
- Pupils' comprehension of the texts they read is sometimes limited because they don't understand some of the words and occasionally pupils who have English as an additional language have difficulty understanding new vocabulary. This means that sometimes they do not entirely understand the meaning of the stories they read.

- Pupils' handwriting throughout the school is still very basic. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to learn how to form letters, but this is not sufficiently embedded or developed in Key Stage 1. Very few pupils learn to join their handwriting in preparation for the transition to the junior school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because teachers' assessments give them a clear understanding of what pupils need to learn. This means that lessons are generally well planned with work that matches different abilities. Pupils' learning is well promoted by a range of exciting tasks and appropriate resources.
- Teachers manage pupils well and adopt different approaches using varied activities to introduce new topics and consolidate pupils' prior learning. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils made rapid progress in developing their multiplication skills because the work was so carefully prepared and well supervised.
- The use of additional adults and strong teamwork are strengths of teaching. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, a group of pupils was skilfully supported and challenged by a member of the support staff; her questioning cleverly extended the pupils' learning and the pupils really enjoyed the session.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children work very hard because teachers and other adults focus tightly on improving their key literacy and mathematical skills. Adults quickly adjust what they are doing when children require extra support or when their learning needs to be extended.
- The teaching of reading and writing is highly effective because teachers pay close attention to detail in systematically developing the essential building blocks of literacy. Year 1 pupils, for example, are taught the difference between nouns, verbs and adjectives so that, by Year 2, they can write at length and use their knowledge and understanding to construct quite complex sentences.
- In most classes pupils learn well because of the clear explanations given by teachers. They understand what they have to do and quickly get on with their work. Occasionally learning is slowed by too many interruptions, and pupils lose track of what they are doing. This was observed in Year 1 where the over-exuberance of a few pupils inhibited the participation of others.
- Where teaching is not as strong, insufficient attention is given to stretching the more able pupils with suitably difficult work.
- Marking is noticeably better in literacy and in mathematics in Year 2 because it gives pupils clear guidance on how to make their work better. Too often, however, marking does not point pupils to their next steps so that they can correct or improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Behaviour is good. They are eager to learn and obviously enjoy their time at school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the things they love about school, including mathematics lessons and reading, as well as a range of additional activities like their 'amazing trip to London zoo'.
- The positive relationships between adults and children are a key factor in raising achievement. The headteacher has put in place a consistent scheme of behaviour management using the

'Traffic light' system. All pupils know how this system works and the consequences if anyone should be given a 'red'!

- Pupils behave consistently well in lessons. They settle quickly and sustain their concentration well. Nonetheless, on occasions, pupils lose focus either because they are not entirely clear about the task or because they are not challenged at the right level.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well. They concentrate for long periods of time and try very hard to succeed. Children learn together happily and show consideration for each other, their teachers and other adults with whom they work. In one lesson, children supported each other to make a den for mini-beasts; they used 'please' and 'thank you' as they passed materials and tools to each other and made a point of including each other's thoughts and ideas in their work. At one point, without prompting, they invited a child working on his own to join their activity.
- The use of a Key Person system to support children's social and emotional needs has been a positive factor in the development of children's confidence and social skills.
- Because some aspects of behaviour are not managed as tightly as most a small number of pupils, particularly boys in Key Stage 1, are over-enthusiastic in offering their opinions and as a result dominate discussion and hinder quieter children from offering their opinions.
- During unstructured times such as lunchtime and playtimes, pupil's behaviour is exceptionally good. Pupils are respectful of one another; they are kind and polite both to their peers and to adults. As with other adults, the lunch time staff model courtesy and positive relationships for the children. They lead play activities such as Kwick-cricket with a genuine and obvious enjoyment of their role. It is a joy to see lunchtime staff having such a positive effect on all pupils.
- Attendance is improving and is now in line with average. There are some pupils with medical needs who, at times, require specific care and are absent from school. The school is fully aware of this and has put in place Family Workers to visit the children and their families. This enables the pupils to continue with school work and provides continuity between home and school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Administrative arrangements to ensure children's safety are thorough. A number of staff hold First Aid qualifications, and statutory training is up-to-date, and members of staff and of the governing body have undertaken the *Safer Recruitment Training*. Child protection is good, school staff work effectively with other services and with families to ensure pupils are safe well and cared for.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and, if anything unkind is said to them or happens to them, they knew exactly who to go to and what to do. They say that there is occasional name-calling but very few instances of bullying. However, they are confident that when it does happen, it is dealt with very quickly.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear and unswerving determination to ensure the school continues on the road to improved achievement for all of its pupils. She has quickly and directly focused on improving the standards of teaching across the whole school to rapidly raise achievement and standards in all year groups.

- Training and clear guidance from the headteacher has strengthened the leadership of others. Developments in literacy and mathematics are well led by the subject leaders, hence the rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and pupil progress in both subjects. Elsewhere, leadership roles are developing but subject and phase leaders do not all confidently drive improvement.
- The introduction of a Key Person for each child means that children's social and emotional needs can be addressed very quickly by one person. The Key Person is also the main contact for parents to gain information about their children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Robust systems are in place for checking the impact of the school's work, and ensuring that governors are well informed. For example, a programme of pupil progress meetings is held termly, involving teachers, senior leaders and governors discussing the progress of specific classes and groups of children, the impact of intervention and the next steps in learning.
- Careful checking of pupils' progress enables resources to be targeted effectively. A successful example of this is the work of the special educational needs coordinator who quickly highlights pupils at risk of falling below their expected targets. She then liaises with the teachers to write an action plan with specific targets and allocates both support staff and resources to that pupil.
- Staff performance is managed well. All teachers and support staff are given clear targets which are closely linked to the whole-school improvement targets and improving teaching.
- The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs and interest levels of pupils and contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enriched by a wide use of exciting visits, resources and experiences. One example is 'language of the month' where the whole school learns not only a new language, this month it is Spanish, but about the culture, food, religion and the geography of a country or region. The pupils say 'hello' in Spanish and are excited about their families being invited into school for a Spanish meal. Such activities help to broaden pupils' outlook, raise aspirations and develop their self-esteem.
- The use of additional funding for the development of sports activities is increasing pupils' skills in and enjoyment of sporting activities. It has been used to buy in specialist sports coaches to teach sports lessons, develop teachers' skills and enhance the curriculum with a range of enrichment activities such as dance lessons, cricket and football. The coaches have taken part in other aspects of school life such as assemblies. To raise aspirations, two pupils from Year 2 have been trained as sports mentors to help other pupils develop sports skills.
- Parents are very supportive of school life and know that they are valued members of the school community. The headteacher has worked hard to put the school at the heart of the community and has successfully encouraged parents and family members to take an active role in their child's learning. Parents join in with mathematics and literacy lessons, as well as a variety of enrichment activities such as coffee mornings and school trips. The range of home-learning opportunities introduced such as the 'Butterfly life cycle' games means that significantly more pupils are able to continue their learning at home.
- The local authority has provided some support this year to enhance and develop good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly helping to develop the role of additional adults and giving general support across all areas of provision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed. They know about the quality of teaching and understand what

the school needs to do to improve. They are developing their capacity to challenge the headteacher and senior leaders about all aspects of school improvement, and also the daily life within the school. Governors meet regularly with school leaders to discuss the key issues, and they report back to the full governing body. They set and review the headteacher's performance management targets ensuring that data are analysed so that appropriate targets might be set. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those related to child protection, safeguarding and equality of opportunity.

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	109572
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	451171

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tasheen Sharif
Headteacher	Justine Abbott
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2013
Telephone number	01582 736529
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