

Foxes Piece (Combined) School

Newfield Road, Marlow, Bucks, SL7 1JW

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Progress is therefore slower in some year groups, especially in writing and mathematics.
- The assessment of pupils is not always based on a wide enough range of evidence. This sometimes leads to an over-generous view of progress. This is especially the case for the most-able pupils.
- Not enough emphasis is placed on pupils writing correctly. They do not always develop their grammar, spelling and punctuation skills as quickly as they could.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunity to solve problems and tackle mathematical puzzles. This means that, although pupils learn processes, they do not learn how to put the knowledge into practice.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' presentation skills. Work is sometimes careless and handwriting untidy.
- The school's procedures to ensure that pupils are safe require improvement. Procedures to review health and safety risks are not carried out regularly enough.
- The school's plans do not identify interim checks by which leaders can measure the progress of their actions. This limits the ability of leaders to revise plans if they are not working.
- Governors do not have a deep enough understanding of the information about pupils' achievement. This limits their ability to challenge school leaders about either the quality of teaching or achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new school leadership has acted decisively to bring about improvements in teaching. The school is well on the way to addressing historically low attainment.
- The conduct and attitudes to learning of pupils are good. They feel safe and are happy in school.
- The school provides well for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They develop the skills to learn well and make good progress.
- Progress in reading is good. Pupils learn the skills of reading quickly, and the school provides effective additional support for pupils who are struggling.
- Middle leaders provide good support in developing teaching. They are increasingly using information about the progress of pupils to plan improvements.
- Progress and provision in the Reception class are good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made 11 visits to classrooms to observe pupils’ learning. Senior leaders accompanied inspectors on some of these visits. Inspectors also examined pupils’ work books, sometimes with school leaders. They also observed other aspects of the school’s work, including an assembly.
- Meetings were held with governors and the vice-chair of the governing body, as well as with teachers and school leaders. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority, including a health and safety officer. The lead inspector also met with the national leader of education (NLE) who is supporting school leadership.
- Pupils took inspectors on a tour of the school. The inspectors also listened to pupils read and spoke to individuals in their classrooms about their work. They spent time in the dining hall and on the school playground, where they also spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate. They also considered the 22 responses on the online survey, Parent View. Inspectors reviewed 18 questionnaire responses from staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school’s own information relating to pupils’ achievement, the school’s review of its work and its plan of action. They also looked at reports of visits made by representatives of the local authority. They considered records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and checks on teaching. The inspectors also reviewed the school’s website.

Inspection team

Martin Marsh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Czornyj

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority speaks English as an additional language.
- The school runs a before-school club and a range of after-school clubs.
- The Reception class is full time.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, a long-standing headteacher has retired and a new headteacher appointed. She took up post in September 2014. A new deputy headteacher took up post at the same time. The school also has appointed a new Chair of the Governing Body since the previous inspection.
- Since March 2015, the school has received support from a national teaching school, Chepping View Primary, where the headteacher is an NLE.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by:
 - using a wider range of evidence to assess pupils in writing and mathematics so as to gain an accurate view of how well pupils are doing, especially the most able
 - putting greater emphasis on pupils using correct grammar, spelling and punctuation
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems in mathematics
 - making higher demands on how pupils present their work, especially their handwriting.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - indicating on school plans clear interim measures by which school leaders, including governors, can check on the impact of their actions during the course of the year
 - strengthening governance so there is a greater understanding of the school's information about the progress of pupils so the governors can challenge more effectively
 - regularly reviewing assessments of risk with regard to health and safety.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have been unable to secure consistently good progress and high enough attainment for pupils. This contributed to attainment at end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014 statutory assessments being well below national averages. In the last year, with the appointment of a new senior leadership team, improvements have been made in teaching and leadership which are resulting in much faster progress for current pupils.
- The school's plans to bring about improvement do not include interim milestones by which leaders, including governors, can check on the progress. The impact of actions cannot therefore be regularly checked during the course of the year. This limits leaders' ability to change direction if something is not working. However, the plans correctly identify the priorities to improve teaching and achievement which are already proving effective.
- The headteacher is passionate in her desire that every pupil at the school should be well prepared for the next stage in their education. A significant number of pupils transfer from other local schools, having fallen well behind in their education, and sometimes they have significant special educational needs. They are often from families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The school's provision and expertise, especially through its nurture units, The Den and Golden Eagles, is strong at developing pupils' self-esteem and readiness to learn. This is resulting in this group of pupils making faster progress the longer they spend at the school.
- The new school leaders have the support of staff and pupils and an increasing proportion of parents. The school is successfully reaching out to all of its parents. Parents recognise the improvements that have been made in teaching and the fact that the school is a happy place. They appreciate the time given to them when they approach the school with a problem or to discuss what the school does to meet their child's needs.
- Improvements in teaching, achievement and attendance during the last year, and the strengths of senior and middle leaders, are indicators of the school's capacity to bring about further improvement.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that pupils are protected from possible child abuse. Staff are well trained to recognise if a child presents signs that they may be being abused or mistreated. They also know what to do if this should happen. Leaders do not assess regularly enough the risks associated with some aspects of health and safety. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Middle leaders have good expertise in the areas they lead. This is enabling them to make significant improvements in the quality of teaching, most notably over time in the teaching of reading, and more recently in the improvements in writing.
- In the last year, leaders and governors have put in place good plans to use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. They understand the challenges presented by the very low starting points of many of these pupils and that the attainment gap historically has been too big. The school's data show the progress of this group to be faster, and that the gap in attainment is closing. Although governors understand the end of Year 2 and Year 6 national data for this group, they are not as aware as they could be of the progress of pupils in other year groups. This is because the school's achievement information is not understood as well as it could be.
- Additional government funding for school sport is used effectively to provide more opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, both at lunchtimes and in after-school clubs. This has resulted in a higher proportion of pupils taking part in aerobic sports activities. Pupils understand how playing sport can help them to keep fit and healthy.
- The range of subjects taught at the school meets the statutory requirements of the new National Curriculum. There is a good variety of visits and visitors to the school to supplement what is provided in lessons. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. British values are promoted well, as evidenced by the good level of understanding by pupils of different faiths and cultures. This contributes to the harmonious school community. Pupils understand the democratic process in being elected to the school council and know their opinions are listened to and valued.
- School leaders are successful in tackling discrimination and fostering good relations. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- The school's well-attended before-school club is contributing to improved punctuality and attendance. It provides a good start to the day to those that attend.
- The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, working on behalf of the local authority, has acted swiftly following the low attainment in 2014 to support and challenge school leaders to bring about improvements. Since

the beginning of March 2015, the principal of a local outstanding national teaching school has been working with school leaders. This is proving to be successful in building the capacity of leadership.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are not as effective as they could be because their depth of understanding of the performance of pupils limits their ability to regularly challenge school leaders. Governors indicated they would welcome an external review of governance, as recommended at this inspection. This would enable them to continue the process of self-evaluation they have been undertaking this year.
- Governors understand about the context of the school and what is bringing about improvements. They generally understand how well the school compares to others. They know that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014 was low and how it is set to rise this year.
- Governors understand how teachers' pay is linked to their performance, but have not been as involved as they might be about decisions regarding pay. They are aware of the quality of teaching and the inconsistencies that still exist. They are prepared to support school leaders if a teacher is not performing well enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct around the school and in class is typically very good. They are polite and courteous, and took pride in talking to inspectors about their work and giving them a tour of their school. In lessons, they work hard and concentrate on the work they are given. On occasions, when the teaching is not as strong, they lose concentration and interest.
- The school has a significant number of pupils who find it difficult to always behave well. Their needs are very well managed, problems are calmly dealt with and they do not interfere with the learning of others. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently and is well understood by pupils and adults.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and aspire to be members of the school council, house captains or walk-to-school champions.
- The school's strategies to improve attendance have been very effective. Attendance in 2013–14 was well below average, but it is now in line with national averages. This is due to the improved relationships the school has forged with parents, especially those who historically have not been involved in the school's work.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they are happy. Parents' responses at the school gate, on Parent View, and from what inspectors gleaned during the inspection support this view.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. It is not good because some of the procedures to assess risks associated with health and safety are not regular enough. The school is vigilant in ensuring children are protected from possible child abuse.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and know what to do should it happen. They understand about cyber bullying, and what to do and what not to do when using the internet. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are very rare.
- Pupils have respect for people's differences, including those related to their faith and cultures. This results in almost no racist incidents or use of prejudiced-based language.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all parts of the school. This results in some groups of pupils not making the progress of which they are capable, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers do not place enough emphasis on the importance of good grammar, spelling and punctuation. Although pupils are keen to write, and they get opportunities to write both in English lessons and other subjects, their progress is slowed by their inability to write correctly. Sometimes teachers look at too narrow a range of evidence to assess pupils' written work. As a result they are over generous in their assessments, particularly for more able pupils. Increasing opportunities to moderate work, both within school and with other local schools, are starting to improve this.
- Pupils' work books in some classes indicate that there are too few opportunities for pupils to solve problems and apply their mathematical skills. This results in learning being too superficial, which slows down their progress. Pupils develop good arithmetic skills, particularly their ability to perform written

calculations. This is because these skills are generally well taught, and pupils get good opportunities to practise and become fluent.

- The teaching of reading is good. There are well-planned programmes in place to teach pupils their letters and the sounds they make (phonics) in the Reception class, and these are built on well in Year 1 and in other year groups. The expertise available to help pupils struggling with their reading is excellent. By the time pupils leave the school they enjoy reading and are well prepared to tackle challenging texts.
- Teachers manage pupils well in lessons. There are very few times when learning is interrupted by teachers having to deal with bad behaviour. In the nurture units, pupils who have difficulty with managing their own behaviour are given skilled help, with notable impact on their behaviour and their learning over time.
- Additional adults provide good support in classrooms and in the large range of small-group interventions that the school provides to help pupils to catch up.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Despite improvements in the quality of teaching, especially during the last year, there are still some year groups where the progress of pupils requires improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 statutory assessments in 2014 indicated that attainment was low, especially in writing. This did not represent inadequate progress, because starting points for this group of pupils were very low. The school's forecasts, supported by work in pupils' books and results on practice papers, indicate that attainment at the end of Year 6 this year will be much improved on 2014. The strong teaching currently in Year 6 has helped the pupils to make excellent in-year progress, especially in writing. Attainment is also likely to be higher overall at the end of Year 2.
- There is a significant gap in the attainment of the small number of disadvantaged pupils in the 2014 end of Key Stage 2 statutory assessments. However, all of these pupils started with very low attainment in Year 3, nearly all with significant special educational needs. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by comparison with all pupils nationally, required improvement, but was not inadequate. Compared to their classmates they were seven terms behind in mathematics, six terms in reading and four terms in writing. Compared to other pupils nationally they were over nine terms behind in mathematics and seven terms in reading and writing. Inspection evidence indicates that the gap in attainment will be much less this year.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read. They receive a good grounding in phonics in the Reception class and this is continued into Year 1. The pass rate on the phonic screening check was close to the national average in 2014, and is set to rise this year. Pupils continue to make good progress in reading throughout their time in school. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are confident and fluent readers.
- The progress of the small number of most-able pupils (pupils who obtained level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1) currently at the school is good. They are increasingly being provided with more challenging work, and most of them are on track to achieve the progress expected of them at the end of Year 6.
- The progress of the school's high proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is good. The school welcomes pupils with a range of complex needs and is successful in helping them to overcome their difficulties so that they can learn well. The small number of pupils who have English as a second language or who belong to minority ethnic groups make good progress. The school is successful in providing equality of learning for all.

The early years provision

is good

- From starting points below those typical for their age, children make good progress in the Reception class. In the 2014 end of Reception assessments, the proportion attaining a good level of development was above the national average and is set to be higher this year. The additional focused interventions for disadvantaged children this year are resulting in the gap closing quickly between them and their classmates. Children are well prepared for moving into Year 1.
- Provision and teaching are good, both inside the classroom and in the outside space. There are plenty of exciting opportunities for children to learn. Children were fascinated when trying to find a combination of interlocking bricks which would float on water. Another group, inspired by a visit to the Gruffalo Trail the day before, were busy constructing a place for the Gruffalo to live. Adults engage with children well, routinely challenging their thinking. The school has identified that it needs to challenge the most-able so more exceed a good level of development.

- Behaviour is very good. Children play together very well and are able to concentrate for extended lengths of time on different activities. Routines are well established. Children happily responded to inspectors' questions about what they were learning.
- Leadership and management of the Reception class are good. Leaders ensure they find out about children before they arrive in school by visiting pre-school settings or their parents' homes. This enables teachers to plan activities when children arrive in school that are based on their interests. Parents of children in the Reception class spoken to during the inspection were very positive about what is provided for their children.
- The provision meets all statutory requirements for ensuring children's health, safety and well-being. For example, on a hot day the school ensured that all children working outside were wearing hats.

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	131523
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	456223

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Jarvis
Headteacher	Jane Byron
Date of previous school inspection	9–10 January 2012
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