

Fox Hill Primary School

Pondmoor Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7JZ

Inspection dates

19–20 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Too few pupils achieve high standards by the end of key stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Activities do not stretch and challenge the most-able pupils to their full capacity.
- Not enough pupils make more than expected progress in writing and mathematics. From low starting points, pupils, including the disadvantaged, are not catching up quickly enough.
- The quality of teaching is variable and not enough is securely good. Teachers do not use assessment information to plan tasks that build on pupils' prior learning well enough.
- Leaders and governors do not analyse pupils' performance information with enough rigour.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not adapt or refine activities when pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs or disability, struggle to comprehend new concepts.
- Leaders and governors do not ensure that all the required information is included on the school's website.
- The leadership of early years requires improvement. Learning records do not include enough detail about children's development, particularly in number.
- Children in the early years do not make as much progress as they are capable of. Adults do not grasp opportunities to talk to children readily enough in order to move learning on more rapidly.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have improved systems to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers receive appropriate training and guidance. As a result, the quality of teaching, particularly of reading, is steadily improving.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen in key stage 1 and key stage 2 since September 2015.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength.
- The proportion of children who start Year 1 with the skills needed for success is above the national average.
- The local authority plays a key role in supporting leaders, governors and teachers in improving the school.
- Behaviour has improved considerably. Consequently, the number of exclusions has declined. Pupils show consideration towards one another.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of leadership and management by:
 - making sure leaders and governors analyse the information they receive about pupils' performance in sufficient depth
 - ensuring that the school's website meets statutory requirements, including publishing the impact of additional funding on raising attainment for disadvantaged pupils
 - further develop the role of middle leaders so that they have greater influence on raising outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring that governors meet their statutory duties in a timely manner.

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing and mathematics, in order to improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - making sure that teachers have an accurate understanding of what pupils already know and can do and adapt tasks to meet their needs
 - ensuring the tasks teachers plan offer sufficient challenge so that the most-able pupils achieve the higher levels
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leadership team, at all levels, has changed considerably since the previous inspection. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the vast majority of the governing body, including the chair, are all relatively new to post. Together they have set about improving the school methodically, showing a steadfast commitment to getting to good. Leaders have successfully addressed a historical culture of low expectations, suitably reinvigorating the school. The headteacher's vision, shared by all staff, encapsulates everyone's commitment to providing pupils with a great education. There has been some success, including a notable improvement in pupils' behaviour and conduct around the school. However, actions to accelerate pupils' rates of progress are only just beginning to take effect and more time is required in order to see the full impact of leaders' actions on raising standards further.
- Leaders have contended well with a high turnover of staff during the last academic year. Now, staffing arrangements are more settled and strengthened by well-considered, recent appointments. Furthermore, senior leaders have overhauled systems to check on the performance of staff. When performance dips, leaders take immediate and decisive action. Leaders make more regular checks on the quality of teaching and steer helpful training and support from the local authority to where it is most needed. In addition, teachers are held to account for the performance of pupils more robustly than in the past. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Leaders have spent time introducing a new system to gather pupils' performance information. However, doubts about the accuracy of information persist. This is because leaders do not question or interrogate the information they receive in sufficient depth or with enough urgency. For example, despite historical underperformance of the most-able learners, leaders have not considered in enough detail the achievement of this group currently in the school.
- Middle leaders are yet to have a significant impact on raising standards in their subjects. However, they are developing their skills steadily and receiving helpful guidance from the local authority. For example, the English leader meets regularly with an advisor to reflect and refine the actions they are taking. Small steps, such as the English leader's introduction of reading cards shared between home and school, are beginning to make a difference to standards.
- Leaders visit lessons and hold meetings with teachers to discuss pupils' performance regularly. As a result, a clearer, better-informed direction is taking hold. For example, leaders acknowledge that standards in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in the past have been too low. Staff training and closer monitoring of pupils' performance is leading to improvements in this aspect. Staff are highly motivated and rightly say the school is improving.
- Leaders plan a range of appropriate interventions to help disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers. There has been some progress, and disadvantaged pupils are narrowing the gap in some year groups but not all. Leaders evaluate the effectiveness of certain programmes in accelerating pupils' progress to inform their decision making. However, the detail of this work is not reflected well enough in school improvement planning or published on the school's website as required.
- The curriculum meets requirements and pupils are taught the appropriate range of subjects. Led by the deputy headteacher, useful work to develop a variety of subjects' appeal to pupils is starting to take hold. Leaders have rightly identified that there are further opportunities to tap into pupils' creativity in order to increase levels of motivation and inspire a greater thirst for learning. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by pupils.
- The school provides plentiful opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Undertakings like the choir performing in the local community, charitable work linked to Sierra Leone and assemblies that enhance pupils' cultural experiences contribute well. Consequently, pupils' understanding of British values such as tolerance, respect and democracy are secure and they are well prepared for life in modern society.
- Pupils have a refined and thoughtful understanding of difference. They accept one another wholeheartedly and are proud that each other's differences are celebrated and embraced by peers. They can draw readily on a multitude of examples to reference how they differ from one another and how their physical characteristics do not define the person inside. Leaders have ensured that this is a school free from discrimination, establishing close-knit relationships between all.
- Teachers and parents express high levels of confidence in the leadership of the school. Many note how

much the school is improving. Staff particularly appreciate the stronger emphasis on ensuring that they receive timely and appropriate training opportunities.

- Sports funding is used well and the rate of participation has increased. Teachers are developing their skills well as they receive regular training from the Bracknell Forest School Sport Partnership. The use of play workers at lunchtimes is increasing both the range of activities and rate of participation. Pupils demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for such activities and their behaviour, health and mental well-being are benefiting as a result.
- The local authority has supported the new leadership team well, recognising the challenges that new leaders have faced in order to halt further decline. Representatives meet with the headteacher and chair of the governing body regularly, reviewing and challenging the school's rate of improvement. This has been helpful and ensured that a close eye is kept on how well pupils are progressing. Guidance and support to develop teaching, leadership and the early years is beginning to take hold and there are positive signs that this is making a difference, more so in certain year groups than others.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body has been a supportive sounding board for the headteacher as she has set about improving the school. They understand the link between teachers' pay and performance.
 - Governors make use of helpful support from the local authority and attend regular training. This year, governors were able, with their growing expertise, to make several useful visits to check for themselves the information they receive. Governors identified, for example, that some middle leaders did not have up-to-date job descriptions. These checks are helpful and beginning to provide useful challenge to school leaders.
 - Governors are beginning to review school performance information more closely than in the past, although not always in a timely enough manner. In addition, the impact of this is hindered by some inaccuracies in the information they receive.
 - Some statutory duties, such as the regular review of key policies, are not always met promptly. More urgency is now required to accelerate the rate of school improvement in order to raise standards further.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that all staff have received appropriate and timely training. As a result, staff are vigilant and well informed and able to trigger confidently the support of outside agencies when necessary. For example, following training on the Government's 'Prevent' duty, staff confidence in, and awareness of, what to do if they have concerns has grown considerably. There is clear evidence that school staff engage well with outside partners, who from time to time provide additional support to families in need. Leaders are attentive and knowledgeable about statutory requirements and ensure that they keep on top of what is required. For example, governors have completed safer recruitment training to ensure that recent appointments of new staff are completed satisfactorily.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- In the past, teaching has not been consistently good, the legacy of which means that, in recent times, pupils have not attained well enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite this, because of increased staff accountability and greater training opportunities, the quality of teaching overall is beginning to improve. Standards are now rising.
- The teaching of reading is improving, although some variability remains. Leaders have revamped the school's approach to the teaching of phonics, ensuring that activities are now better matched to pupils' starting points. More regular reflection that gives due consideration to how well pupils are grasping new sounds is ensuring that standards are rising. Pupils read regularly, enjoying books appropriate to their abilities.
- New assessment systems are at an early stage and are not used well enough to inform teachers' planning. As a result, pupils sometimes complete activities, particularly in mathematics, that do not build sufficiently well on their prior knowledge and understanding. Pupils' ability to move forward rapidly in their understanding, or to master new concepts, is sometimes hindered by the less effective, non-sequential planning of activities. When this is the case, progress slows.
- Leaders regularly review the school's approach to marking and feedback. Expectations are implemented with a high level of consistency across the school. Pupils benefit from their teachers' guidance and act comprehensively upon the advice they receive. As a result, standards are rising.

- In some classes, teachers' expectations are still too low, particularly for the most-able pupils, who are not always challenged to reach their full potential. This is particularly the case in mathematics, as pupils do not tussle with new concepts or build on what they already know regularly enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to solve problems that are more complex and demonstrate their reasoning prowess.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are encouraged well by teaching assistants. However, on occasion, activities are not appropriately adapted or refined to meet their needs well. When pupils struggle to grasp a new concept, such as divisibility, adults are too slow to adapt activities or the resources available to support these pupils' learning more effectively.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Pupils respond well to feedback they receive and as a result their grasp of punctuation, spelling and grammar conventions is developing well. However, less attention is afforded to pupils' presentation and handwriting skills. Work is not routinely presented to a high standard.
- Parents are positive. Many rightly believe that the quality of teaching is improving and that their children are making better progress than in the past. Some are unsure about the school's new approach to homework. However, pupils expressed very positive views about having greater choice in the activities they could select.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils' well-being is central to the school's work. For example, at lunchtime older pupils choreograph dances and then teach younger pupils the moves. During the inspection, it was clear that such activities are popular, bringing pupils together and generating an uplifting, joyous atmosphere.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They are categorical in their view that bullying is not something that happens at Fox Hill Primary School. Pupils are clear about what constitutes bullying and know how to seek support from adults if the need were to arise.
- Leaders have ensured that each other's differences and uniqueness are attributes to be celebrated. As a result, there is no discrimination of any kind.
- Parents are confident that pupils are safe, happy and cared for attentively. They are equally positive about the changes unfolding because of leaders' deep-rooted commitment to pupils. They appreciate the high levels of care their children receive.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud to be members of Fox Hill Primary School. During the inspection, pupils attending breakfast club voluntarily made thank you posters, illustrating numerous reasons why they love their school.
- The school's values of 'nurture, inspire, challenge and excellence' are fully understood by all. Pupils take delight in achieving a 'Fox Hill award' when nominated by their peers for exhibiting the school's values consistently. Such work goes beyond tokenism; school values are explained and understood fully by pupils.
- Behaviour has improved. Higher expectations and clearer systems have ensured that the number of exclusions seen last academic year has declined significantly. From time to time, pupils' engagement in learning wavers. This is particularly true when tasks lack sufficient challenge or are not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities.
- Work to develop pupils' social skills has had a tangible impact and the number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour is declining rapidly. Pupils are good-natured and understand how to get along amicably with one another. Parents and staff agree that behaviour has improved considerably in recent times.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Parents appreciate the warm welcome they and their children receive every morning from the headteacher. The level of persistent absence, particularly among disadvantaged pupils, has fallen considerably. Pupils have positive attitudes and look forward to school, as 'every day is different'.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because not enough pupils attain the standards expected for their age. In 2015, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 was below that seen nationally. In key stage 1 attainment in writing and mathematics was significantly below that seen nationally and below in reading.
- Pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs or disability are now beginning to make better progress than in the past, particularly in Year 6. However, in other year groups although more pupils are now making expected progress, too few are making more than expected progress. This means that pupils' progress is insufficient to allow them to catch up from low starting points and achieve what is expected at their stage of development.
- In 2015, the proportion of children in early years who achieved a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year was above that seen nationally. Standards are rising, and gaps between the achievements of disadvantaged children and those of their peers are closing rapidly.
- In 2015, standards in the Year 1 phonics check were below the national average. Teachers in early years and key stage 1 have benefited from training opportunities and the school's information shows that children are acquiring the skills needed for success in reading more rapidly than in the past.
- Standards are rising in writing. More pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age, although this remains below the national average. All pupils make expected progress, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Children enter early years with skills and abilities typical of those expected for their age. Children make good progress. In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development was above the national average. A small proportion exceeded the early learning goals.
- Although the curriculum is resourced imaginatively, adults do not seize on opportunities to interact and talk to children about their learning. While children enjoy activities such as mark making in brightly coloured sand or dressing up as a story character, adults do not explore children's thinking in sufficient depth. This limits the scope for securing children's knowledge and understanding.
- The leadership of early years requires improvement. Plans to improve this aspect of the school lack precision and it is unclear how leaders are tackling the areas that require improvement systematically.
- Learning records cover all aspects of learning, but some aspects in more depth than others. Some parts of the curriculum, such as number, are not covered in sufficient depth.
- In 2015, children from disadvantaged backgrounds made slower progress from their starting points than their peers and too few achieved a good level of development. Consequently, this group were not adequately prepared for learning in Year 1. This year, adults have ensured that this group are making better progress and the gap between their achievements and that of their peers is narrowing rapidly.
- Children behave well. They share resources, take turns and show consideration towards each other. They are adept at making choices and can stick to tasks for concentrated periods. Routines are well established and children know how to put resources away, such as hanging up an apron after painting activities.
- Phonics is taught effectively. Children make good progress in acquiring the skills needed for success in early reading. Adults model new sounds effectively and this contributes well to the progress children make.
- The learning environment, including the outdoors, is rich, with a variety of stimulating and appealing activities that children enjoy. Parents are positive about the start their children receive.

School details

Unique reference number	109805
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10009210

This inspection 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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Jaques
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Coxell
Telephone number	01344 421809
Website	www.foxhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk
Email address	secretary@office.foxhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 February 2014

Information about this school

- Fox Hill Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. There is one class in each year group from Nursery to Year 6.
- The early years provision comprises two classes, one Nursery class and one Reception class. Children attend the Nursery part time and Reception full time.
- The school offers a breakfast club, run by the governing body.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible free school meals, is above average. One in every three pupils is entitled to this additional support.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The school shares a site with a children's centre, which was not subject to this inspection.
- The headteacher started in September 2014. The deputy headteacher started in January 2015. Other leaders, including most members of the governing body, including the chair, have taken up post in recent times.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and parts of lessons, eight of which were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also heard pupils reading and discussed their reading progress with them. A meeting was held with a group of pupils in Year 4 and Year 6.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with significant responsibilities, a representative of the local authority and three representatives of the governing body, including the chair.
- Inspectors took into account 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors also considered the 23 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, records showing leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, and documents about how the school keeps pupils safe.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Farr, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mrs Penelope Orme

Ofsted Inspector

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