

Inspection of Foxes Piece School

Newfield Road, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 1JW

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils treasure belonging to this inclusive and caring school. At the heart of its work is a firm focus on pupils' personal development. They talk about the 'Foxy values' of resilience, independence, kindness, respect and equality with pride. A clear personal, social and health education programme supports pupils to understand important concepts. These include staying safe, building healthy relationships and celebrating difference. Pupils make a purposeful contribution to school life through their roles as diversity leaders, reading ambassadors and eco-warriors. They are proud of the welcome the school has given to Ukrainian pupils joining the school in recent months.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils generally rise to these expectations. They understand the difference between unkindness and bullying. Pupils are right to be confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with swiftly. 'Positive playtimes' provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. They relish the opportunities to be active.

Pupils enjoy learning. They recall theme days and visits fondly. Every pupil from Year 1 learns to play a musical instrument. There are opportunities for pupils to perform in school and within the community. However, they sometimes struggle to recall what they have learned because of weaknesses in the curriculum.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils flourish personally and socially. Leaders and governors are rightly proud of the welcome the school gives to pupils who may be experiencing challenges in their lives. They are not as clear in how they will achieve their ambitions for pupils' academic success.

Some pupils are not learning as well as they could. Curriculum leaders have not all planned the curriculum precisely enough yet. Where they have thought carefully about what should be learned and when, for example in music and science, pupils build their knowledge as they move through the school. In other subjects, curriculum leaders have not set out the key content pupils need to know and remember, so they have gaps in their learning. In early years, leaders have identified what children should know by the end of the year. They have not, however, consistently given sufficient thought to the small steps children need to take to get there. Nor have they considered how the early years curriculum links to all subjects in key stage 1.

The missing links in the curriculum are sometimes compounded by weaknesses in some staff's subject knowledge. Without clear enough guidance, they do not always know what the next steps in pupils' learning should be. In mathematics, for example, teachers do not always give pupils enough practice to consolidate their understanding. They move them on to new learning too quickly. Checks on pupils'

learning are not used well enough across some subjects to pick up any gaps or misconceptions and put them right quickly.

Some pupils do not learn to read quickly enough. While the school has a phonics programme in place to teach early reading, this is not used well enough during additional support sessions. Not all support staff have had the necessary training to teach it well. The support given to pupils who fall behind is not always accurate enough to help them to catch up. Some staff do not use the right strategies to help pupils work out what they are reading. Furthermore, the books these pupils are given to read do not always match the sounds they know. This hampers them practising and strengthening their reading skills. That said, pupils are developing a love of books. They enjoy listening to the stories that teachers read to them. Leaders make sure that these books reflect pupils' diverse community.

Leaders' ambitions for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not fully realised. There are clear processes in place to identify any additional needs. Leaders make sure that they seek advice from external agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils with SEND where needed. However, the weaknesses in the curriculum mean that teaching is not always adapted well enough to enable them to learn alongside their classmates.

Pupils' positive attitudes to school are evident throughout the age groups. Development of these begins in early years, where there are clear routines and expectations. Throughout the school, staff model respectful behaviour. There is a consistent approach to managing behaviour across the school. In lessons, low-level disruption is not tolerated. Pupils are provided with reminders to adapt their behaviour. They listen to adults. Leaders work with families to promote good attendance, but there are still a small number of pupils who do not come to school regularly enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff take safeguarding seriously. Leaders remain up to date with local risks. They use this information to support families. Staff are trained for their safeguarding leadership roles and support one another. This results in effective leadership of safeguarding.

The school follows clear procedures to ensure that all necessary checks are taken when recruiting new staff. It makes timely referrals to support pupils who are at risk. Where necessary, leaders challenge external agencies so help is put in place for families.

Pupils are taught how to be safe. They understand the risks they may face online and in the real world.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in the teaching of early reading. The weakest readers do not learn to read quickly and fluently. Leaders need to ensure that all staff are well trained to teach early reading and that reading books are well matched to the sounds pupils are learning.
- In some subjects, leaders have not yet identified and sequenced all of the key content that teachers need to teach. This means that pupils are not always able to make links between concepts securely enough so that they build knowledge systematically. Leaders need to continue to review and refine the curriculum.
- Teachers do not always design tasks that enable pupils to achieve well in all subjects. Leaders should continue to make sure that professional development is prioritised in those curriculum areas where teachers' subject knowledge is less strong.
- Checks on pupils' learning are not always swift enough. This means that misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are not identified quickly enough. Leaders should continue to embed the use of formative assessment practice.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	131523
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10242189
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynn Davern
Headteacher	Jane Byron
Website	www.foxespiece.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The chair of governors has been in post since the start of the academic year. She was previously a member of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also met with other school leaders, staff and pupils.

- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative from Buckinghamshire local authority.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and French. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also reviewed curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subject areas.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspection team considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 21 free-text responses. An inspector talked with some parents on the first morning of the inspection.
- The inspection team met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school professional development plan and pupil premium funding plan.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rachel Roberts

Ofsted Inspector

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