

Foster's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101451
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	286065
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Krafft HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Green
Headteacher	Mr Bruce Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Westbrooke Road Welling DA16 1PN
Telephone number	020 8298 7336
Fax number	020 8298 7312

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Foster's is a large primary school with a Nursery. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a very small minority speak a language other than English as their first language. The social and economic circumstances of families are mixed with a lower than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is also low.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Foster's is a happy school, valued by parents and pupils alike, that provides a satisfactory education. As one parent wrote, 'It is a happy, caring, inclusive environment'. A particular strength is the strong focus given to the personal development of all pupils. In this caring school the well-being of everyone matters. As a result pupils attend regularly, feel safe, well cared for and overwhelmingly enjoy being at school.

Pupils get off to a good start in their education when they enter the Nursery. Most have the skills and knowledge expected of their age, although their mathematical development is weaker. Clear planning, a wide range of stimulating resources, effective teaching and good support from Nursery nurses ensure that pupils make good progress. As a result they enter Year 1 at above the expected levels. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school to maintain above average standards at the end of Year 2 and 6.

Excellent relationships throughout the school contribute powerfully to pupils' enjoyment of learning. 'Teachers are kind, friendly and make lessons fun' is a comment echoed by many pupils. They particularly enjoy lessons that give them practical opportunities to be actively involved and say that the use of the interactive whiteboards has really helped to make lessons interesting. For example, they spoke enthusiastically about a history lesson when they travelled back through time to Ancient Greece in the 'Tardis'. The school's work to develop a good, creative curriculum that links subjects together is proving successful and appreciated by the pupils. Although there are strengths in teaching it is satisfactory overall because teachers are using assessment information that does not always establish the highest level of challenge for all pupils. As a result they make satisfactory rather than good progress.

All staff work well together as a team and share a clear vision of the school with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The management structure is being developed to strengthen the impact of leadership at all levels on standards and provision. Monitoring and assessment are systematic and used to target resources and plan for improvement but they are not sharply focused on the achievement of pupils and how this will be measured. As a result the school's evaluation is inaccurate in some aspects.

School development has recently focused on improving the personal and emotional development of pupils in the Foundation Stage and in closing the attainment gap between boys and girls. Success in these areas demonstrates that there is satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rates of progress pupils make in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Raise expectations in lessons by ensuring targets are sufficiently challenging.
- Improve the accuracy of self evaluation by linking improvement planning and monitoring more sharply to the overall achievement of pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which has areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils settle into school life well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage to achieve levels above those expected for their age. Satisfactory progress is made as pupils move through the school to maintain above average standards.

In Key Stage 1 in 2006, standards were above average and girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Performance in writing was particularly good for both boys and girls. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 pupils reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Overall, the attainment gap between boys and girls was narrowed. The school exceeded its targets in all three subjects.

Whole school targets for pupils' attainment have become more challenging. However, the school's tracking systems show that pupils' progress is being slowed by the adjustment of individual targets year on year. For example, when some pupils fail to meet their end of year target instead of putting strategies in place to make sure they catch up to achieve their end of key stage target, less challenging targets are set.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because they are well supported and their performance is evaluated rigorously.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and well-being of all pupils are strong features of the school. They are confident, articulate and thoroughly enjoy taking part in all that the school offers. Pupils develop good social skills, treating each other with consideration and courtesy. They feel valued and have a strong sense of belonging. Their positive attitudes and love of school are directly attributable to the atmosphere of mutual respect and pleasure in each other's company that pervades the school. They value the work of the democratically elected school council, for example in introducing the friendship stop and playground friends. They behave well, feel safe and are confident that any concerns they have are taken seriously and acted on promptly. They are particularly knowledgeable about how to stay healthy and keep fit. As one said sagely, 'We eat fruit and drink water because it helps us to concentrate'. They are proud that they have achieved a healthy school award and enjoyed being involved in the healthy eating day. They make a positive contribution to the local and school community through their willingness to taking on responsibility, such as becoming school road safety officers. They are very aware of the issue of global warming and have introduced recycling bins. Good literacy and numeracy skills and well developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and include some good and on occasion outstanding features. In the Foundation Stage, routines and expectations are quickly established. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and a supportive learning environment.

Nursery nurses make an important contribution to developing children's good learning habits. Teaching across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations and are rigorously focused on evaluating the learning of individual pupils. Good subject knowledge underpins well-prepared and interesting lessons where there are opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively to secure and extend their learning. This is not the case in all lessons. In some, pupils are not required to participate or think for themselves enough. Lessons are over-directed by teachers and learning objectives lack challenge. Consequently, opportunities to stretch pupils and accelerate their progress are missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils well. The involvement in the 'Creative Learning Journey' innovations project has led to a revitalised curriculum, about which pupils and staff are enthusiastic. Subjects are linked to make them more meaningful and interesting. For example, pupils particularly enjoyed linking history and design and technology to create 'Pillows of Time'. As a result pupils have a clearer understanding of what they are learning and actively participate with enthusiasm but the expected development of higher learning skills such as reflection and questioning is still at the early stages. The provision for personal, social and health education and circle time, when pupils can share their feelings and concerns, is particularly strong and contributes significantly to their readiness for learning. There is a good range of well attended extra curricular activities. Links with a local secondary school enhance sporting opportunities, for instance, through the coaching of skills such as rugby, tennis, basketball and golf.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to the strong personal development and well-being of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. Pupils are safe and are clear about how they should treat others. Well managed, thoughtful transition and induction procedures help both pupils and parents to cope with change confidently and ensure pupils are properly prepared for the next stage of their education. Strong partnership with parents and other agencies benefits pupils and contributes to the good quality of support. Arrangements for the protection and safeguarding of children meet requirements and are robust.

Academic guidance is less strong. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work and develop as learners. Whilst individuals are set targets, they are not always challenging enough. In addition, too much marking simply confirms what pupils have achieved rather than what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management at all levels are satisfactory. The headteacher, effectively supported by his deputy headteacher, has built a team with a strong commitment to maintaining high standards and promoting the good personal development and well being of all pupils. The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis and resources are deployed appropriately to meet

the needs of all pupils. There have been a number of recent staffing changes but new teachers are well supported. Systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are in place and are increasingly involving subject leaders in lesson observations. However, the evaluation of monitoring and planning for improvement lacks a sharp and accurate focus on the achievement of pupils. Governors take their role seriously and are committed to supporting the school. They feel they are kept well informed about the work of the school by the headteacher. However, the degree of challenge they are able offer is limited as their involvement in monitoring, through an annual governor day, has only recently been introduced.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Foster's Primary School, Welling, DA16 1PN

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking with so many of you. You were very polite, confident and told us what you thought very clearly.

You and your parents are rightly very proud of your school. You really enjoy being there because you get on well with each other and enjoy the many exciting things you do. You trust and respect the adults and you told us you feel safe and well cared for. You behave well, work hard and find learning about different subjects together really interesting. I was very impressed by your 'Pillows of Time' and was fascinated to hear that some of you even travel back in time to find out about Ancient Greece.

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school a caring and attractive place and you get a satisfactory education. To make it even better, we have asked them to help you make even more progress by making sure your targets and the work you are given are challenging enough. We have also asked them to keep checking that you are making as much progress as you possible can so that they know if they need to do anything differently.

Thank you again for making us so welcome and we hope that you carry on working hard and enjoying being at school.

With very best wishes

Jackie Krafft
Her Majesty's Inspector