

Foxfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100156
Local Authority	Greenwich
Inspection number	307307
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Saxby
Headteacher	Ms Joanna Gledhill and Ms Julia Cotton
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Sandbach Place London SE18 7EX
Telephone number	020 8854 0816
Fax number	020 8317 8244

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Inspection number	307307

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Foxfield is a large school that serves a mixed community with very high levels of social deprivation. Pupils speak over 30 different languages and there has been an increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees. A very high proportion of pupils speak English in addition to their home language. Pupils from White British heritages make up one third of the school population. The next largest group are from Black African heritages. An exceptionally high proportion of pupils join and leave the school throughout the year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than in most schools. The school has experienced high staff turnover over the last 2 years. The deputy and assistant headteacher were appointed between September 2005 and January 2006. In September 2006, they took over as joint acting headteachers. The school has faced complex staffing difficulties, due to promotion, illness and maternity leave. These issues are now largely resolved. The school is in the process of appointing a permanent headteacher. The school has the Healthy School award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Foxfield is a welcoming school that provides a satisfactory education. The acting headteachers are sharply focused on improving standards. The strong staff team is pushing the school forward in what they describe as, 'very challenging but fulfilling circumstances'. As a result, the pupils are making satisfactory progress from a very low starting point. Currently, standards are exceptionally low by the end of Years 2 and 6.

Targets to improve standards are suitably challenging. Evidence from the lessons and assessment information, show that pupils are on track to reach these targets. This is a direct result of improved leadership by senior managers and middle managers. However, governors are neither sufficiently involved in helping the school to improve nor do they have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school provides a caring haven. This helps pupils to develop self-esteem and gain confidence. The improving curriculum helps pupils to contribute well to the community, adopt healthier lifestyles and enjoy learning. Most pupils behave well, although a few need considerable support because they have complex behavioural difficulties. Pupils are often enthusiastic learners and value the good pastoral care.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills well and this is important, as many pupils struggle to express themselves with clarity. This has a positive impact on all pupils and especially those new to learning English. Lessons are mostly well planned, but some lessons lack enough challenge to increase the rate of progress the pupils make.

The focus on writing is helping pupils to write sentences that are more complex. Due to changes in the curriculum, through the 'Big Write' project, pupils are editing their writing more and this is helping them to achieve satisfactorily. In mathematics, pupils are becoming more confident and accurate in using their tables and mental calculations.

Parents have confidence in the school overall, but are right to have some concerns about reading. Several parents noted that reading books are too easy for their children. Pupils do not make quick enough progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 because of a lack of challenge and rigour in reading lessons. As a result, pupils have weak skills in knowing how to go about reading new words. Leaders have recognised this and have started training staff and purchasing new books. Improved monitoring and checking of pupils' progress, together with the introduction of a more rigorous programme for teaching letters and sounds (phonics), has led to improved standards in the Foundation Stage. These techniques are now being introduced into Year 1 and 2 classes but have not yet had enough effect in class lessons. However, daily booster groups are having a very positive impact on reading and mathematics standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with very weak communication and language skills. Many children do not speak English and often find it very hard to cooperate with others. Several are not toilet trained and they know little about numbers or the world around them. They get off to a good start in the Nursery and this is built on successfully in the Reception class. Leaders have successfully lifted the quality of learning to good so that activities are both interesting and challenging. Children are making quicker progress than was the case a year ago and far more

are now on track to reach the goals expected when they join Year 1. For example, most children already know 19 letter sounds due to strong teaching of skills and good assessment of their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards, especially in reading for pupils in Years 1 and 2 so that teaching, learning and assessment are more effective and pupils quickly learn basic skills and read suitably challenging books.
- Ensure that there is consistently good teaching and challenge in all lessons, so that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Improve governance, so that all governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and can better influence school improvements.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Results in 2007 confirm that standards are exceptionally low by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, mathematics and science. In Key Stage 2, there was a steady increase in standards between 2004 and 2006, but staffing difficulties impacted on standards in 2007. Low standards on entry to the school, high mobility and complex staffing difficulties partly explain the exceptionally low attainment that is evident by the end of Year 6. Pupils often make good progress as they move through Years 3 and 6. Until recently, pupils had made slower progress in Years 1 and 2. This contributed to the very low standards reached by the end of Year 6. Achievement is now improving in Years 1 and 2. The school's assessments, samples of work and observations during the inspection, confirm that pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 is still too slow to lift standards quickly. Pupils are making much better progress in writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils like coming to school, their attendance is improving and they enjoy the range of extra activities offered to them. These help pupils to develop fitness and they enrich their musical and creative experiences. Most pupils behave well but a few need considerable support because they have complex behaviour problems. Pupils show a good respect for different cultures and beliefs, although occasionally pupils make unkind comments to each other; these are rarely racist. They are proud of the stickers which monitors give them for eating all their fruit and vegetables at lunchtime. They are getting fitter and choose healthy foods due to a focus on this. The school helps pupils to learn how to work with others, take responsibility and gain important speaking, writing and mathematical skills. However, too many pupils are not developing reading skills early enough to equip them with all the skills they need for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils show positive attitudes and effective behaviour management ensures the lessons are calm and business like. Lessons are well planned and pupils learn new things steadily. However, there is inconsistency in the challenges given to pupils and the pace of learning in some lessons. This restricts the school's efforts to increase the rate of progress the pupils make. The practising of tables and quick addition, subtraction, multiplication and division are improving standards. Discussion activities and detailed marking of pupils' work are helping pupils to improve their writing. Learning in reading, in Years 1 and 2, is not as good as it should be and is slowed by teachers not having enough adults to help pupils to practise skills. A lack of suitably challenging books and, inadequate planning for guided reading sessions also slows progress. When reading, one girl said, 'The book's so easy, I can even shut my eyes and read it without looking'. Assessment of pupils' reading levels and skills are not yet good enough in class lessons, but is good in booster groups. Parents are not always helping their children enough with reading at home. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to help pupils to learn in different ways.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is developing and is focused on improving basic skills and helping pupils to gain wider personal skills. The school has been most successful in modifying the provision for writing and mathematics. Reading is improving, but there is still much to do. The introduction of booster classes is a good initiative and as a result, pupils are catching up and show quicker progress in the reading groups than they do in guided reading lessons. Booster groups also contribute to pupils' improving progress in mathematics and writing. Children have a good start in the Foundation Stage where their learning is fun and meaningful. Pupils' learning is enriched by visitors and visits, as is evident by the very popular trip to Swanage.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents confirm that their children are well cared for overall. The school works well with outside agencies to enhance the support given to pupils and is working to develop stronger links with parents. Clear procedures are in place for Child Protection. There are effective systems in place to support pupils with learning difficulties, those whose first language is not English and newly arrived pupils. As a result, these groups are well supported and make similar progress to other learners. Individual counselling helps those with complex behavioural problems, so that they do not hamper the learning of others. However, the lack of a learning mentor and a spare room, where they can find sanctuary, has resulted in a high proportion of exclusions. Pupils have a good knowledge of their individual targets for writing and mathematics, but they do not have enough guidance about how to improve their reading.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders have recently re-evaluated the work of the school, so that it is accurate and feeds into a good plan to accelerate standards. As a result, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Leadership in the Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 1 and, for English has improved greatly. Senior staff are well supported by middle managers. The school's improvement targets are suitably challenging. Improved assessment systems in writing and mathematics mean that pupils' progress is now checked rigorously twice a term, rather than just once. Assessments in reading are a focus for continued development, so that pupils who make slower progress are quickly identified and supported. Leaders are working well on writing and mathematics and have allocated £20,000 to the purchasing of new resources for reading. Plans are well underway to improve the teaching of reading. A new Chair of Governors was appointed in January 2007 and is working hard to encourage greater support from other governors, as they are not fully enough involved in evaluating the school's strengths and planning areas for school development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	4
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

19 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxfield Primary School, London, SE18 7EX

You may remember that three inspectors came to your school recently to find out how good it is and how well you are doing. Thank you for being friendly and telling us about your school. We are writing to let you know our findings.

You go to a welcoming and caring school and your school is satisfactory. This means that most things are suitable for you and some aspects need to be better. You usually try hard in lessons and enjoy the different activities that the school provides. Most of you behave well and the school is helping you to become more confident and skilled. We know that you are making steady progress but we would like more of you to reach higher levels in your work. This is important, as it will help you to do well in the future. Well done for working hard on your writing, tables and calculations, please keep this up. Teachers help you to understand new things and we are pleased how well you are trying to become as healthy as possible. We especially like the way that you do things to help others in your community. You have been improving your attendance, congratulations! Please continue to come to school every day. In particular, we liked the Nursery and Reception class activities.

Your headteacher and all other teachers are keen to do the best they can for you. We want to help them, so we have asked them to:

- make sure that more of you gain higher levels in your work and are helped to learn to read more quickly, especially in Years 1 and 2
- make sure that more lessons are good
- ensure that governors help the school as much as they can to improve.

Please help them by reading every day at home and in school. You will be pleased to hear that your teachers are using some of the school's money to buy exciting new books. We hope that you enjoy reading them very much.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead inspector