

Foxford School and Community Arts College

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 103732 |
| Local Authority | Coventry |
| Inspection number | 308405 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 February 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | Brian Cartwright HMI |

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

| | |
|---|--|
| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–19 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 1047 |
| 6th form | 147 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Linda Bigham |
| Headteacher | R Williamson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 22 November 2004 |
| School address | Grange Road Longford Coventry CV6 6BB |
| Telephone number | 02476 369200 |
| Fax number | 02476 369201 |

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Age group | 11-19 |
| Inspection dates | 27–28 February 2008 |
| Inspection number | 308405 |

© Crown copyright 2008

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 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized specialist arts and humanities school is set in the north of Coventry. The socio-economic indicators of the area show above average levels of deprivation. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. About two in every five students are from minority heritage backgrounds, predominantly Indian. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Foxford School is providing a sound education for all of its students irrespective of their backgrounds and abilities. The school is determined to ensure every learner succeeds, and routinely adapts its good curriculum in response to learners' needs. Effective partnerships with local schools and specialist agencies are one reason why the care, guidance and support of students are so good. Consequently, almost all students complete compulsory schooling despite, in some cases, considerable barriers to learning. All but one student from Year 11 in 2007 moved on to further education, training or employment.

Academic standards over time are broadly in line with national averages and represent satisfactory achievement. Students enjoy school, although a few felt that the school's initial response to alleged bullying is inconsistent. Once the school recognises students' concerns, these are dealt with effectively. Most students participate in school trips and extra-curricular activities. Good resources from the specialist arts and humanities status support many of these activities. The rich range of opportunities is good evidence of the commitment and dedication of school staff, who share in the leadership team's vision of widening the horizons for all learners. There is also good liaison, through the specialist status, with local primary schools that is helping to improve the entry standards of pupils in the arts and sports.

Teaching is satisfactory with some strengths, but also some weaknesses. These are most apparent in the variable quality of lesson planning to ensure all students are set challenging work and in the consistency of information from day-to-day marking on how students could improve. The systems for monitoring students' overall progress and then intervening to help improve it are good. Frequent 'snapshot' reports give both students and tutors regular updates, in terms of current working levels and the expected final target. Systems for regularly monitoring teaching quality are in place and give managers an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. However, this information is not yet being used rigorously enough to improve consistency and thus raise standards.

Governors have a satisfactory understanding of school performance and are now more aware of the importance of value added measures. However, performance targets have historically not been challenging enough to raise expectations of what is possible. Good support by the local authority is resulting in an understanding that the community's best interests will be served by students achieving the highest possible educational standards. Despite the well above average level of funding, school standards have improved only slowly since the previous inspection, representing inadequate value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form also provides a sound education to students; it is continuing to grow because its good curriculum ensures that students find an appropriate combination of courses that are matched to their attainment and interests. There are good support and guidance systems for students, including help for coursework and proactive tutoring that gives deadlines and oversees applications for their future. Most students gain results to be expected from their standards on entry, and almost all of them complete their courses successfully. The students contribute to the school community very well, and are well prepared for their future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistent use of prior attainment information to plan tasks that challenge every student in all lessons.
- Ensure all day-to-day marking gives students precise guidance on the steps they need to take to reach challenging targets.
- Take rigorous action at all levels on the findings of systematic and frequent monitoring of teaching by deploying sufficient resources to ensure consistency of good lesson practice.
- Ensure all staff are fully briefed on the need to respond consistently to students who raise concerns about alleged bullying.

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

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards and achievement are satisfactory across all stages in the school, including the sixth form. Students arrive in Year 7 with lower than average standards. Through Key Stage 3, they make satisfactory progress overall, and standards are slowly rising over time. In Year 9 English and science tests in 2007, achievement was above average.

Key Stage 4 examination results in 2007 were well below average, although the cohort of students in this year group entered the school with even lower than usual standards, and with 23 more boys than girls. Effective intervention kept some challenging students on a personalised programme of education. The proportion of students gaining five high grade GCSEs (37%) was close to the targets set by the school. Progress in English and mathematics was satisfactory and 34% of students gained five higher grades including English and mathematics. The current Year 11 students are showing sharp improvements to standards this year in comparison to 2007.

Students for whom English is an additional language achieved slightly better than the school average. There were no significant differences in achievement between students of different heritages or students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Looked-after children also achieved satisfactory educational outcomes.

Standards and achievement in the sixth form are satisfactory; students enter with lower standards in comparison to other sixth forms but make reasonable progress in a good range of courses. Almost all students complete these courses successfully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory, and good in the sixth form. Students develop good social, spiritual and cultural understanding thanks to the wide range and high participation in trips, visits, creative arts performances and clubs, and good health and sex education. These also give them a sound appreciation of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. However, students say that sometimes, some students are unkind towards them, suggesting that for too many students their self-control and moral development is only

satisfactory. Students say that sometimes the school does not respond initially to such incidents, although effective action occurs once the school realises the circumstances. Students behave well around the school and in most lessons thanks to a happy atmosphere and good relationships with staff. In some less well taught lessons, some students choose to chatter or disengage from the task in hand. Exclusions are reducing although are still high. The school council is making an excellent contribution to the school; students involved in it are developing very good personal qualities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are securing adequate progress for all groups of learners, both in the main school and sixth form. Good lessons challenge a range of abilities within each class and are fast-paced, with plenty of different tasks for each student to attempt. Students like this variety. They enjoy lessons that capture their imagination. The most enthusiastic, expert teachers engage students using humour, encouragement and high expectations. In one example, students in Year 11 found that 'the force was with them' as they made water flow sideways, and had a literally electrifying experience as they saw first-hand the 'hair on end' effects of thousands of volts! The best lessons conclude with students feeding back to teachers on the extent to which they have met the challenging learning objectives.

However, too many lessons are planned to meet the needs of just one level of ability. These lessons do not engage all the students with appropriate activities and, as a result, some students become uninterested in learning. In these situations, low-level disruption can occur if teachers do not tackle it.

The best day-to-day marking gives students clear praise and simple instructions on how to improve. Good examples of such marking were seen in English and science. However, some marking is perfunctory, or contains demands for completion or correction that are not then followed up.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The range of courses, including vocational subjects and specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is extensive. The school is effective at responding to the needs of different cohorts of learners, so it includes every student right through to the end of the courses. The school successfully participates in a local curriculum federation with other schools and colleges, which further widens choice for students aged between 14 and 19. All students in Key Stage 4 now follow approved courses in information and communication technology (ICT) and humanities, in addition to the core requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is reviewing the programme followed by students in the pupil learning centre to ensure they continue to study in parallel with their mainstream peers.

The school is also committed to an extended curriculum programme of visits, trips, clubs and activities. Most students enjoy taking part in some kind of additional activity every term. Many

of the activities are supported by the specialist school status, and include specialist dance, drama and aerobics clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The care of students of all backgrounds at this school is a real strength. It ensures effective support and guidance throughout their school life. The school works very well with external agencies, such as behaviour support and the educational psychology service. Expertise is therefore wisely used to help overcome barriers to learning experienced by some vulnerable learners. This good support extends to the transition arrangements as students start in secondary school. Good systems to monitor attendance, behaviour and progress have been sharpened in the light of the 2007 results, so that now every student receives twice termly 'snapshot' reports showing their current and expected performance levels. This is already resulting in improved attendance (up 4% for the current Year 11 in comparison to the same period last year) and sharply reducing levels of exclusion.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school runs well on a day-to-day basis, and the responsiveness of management to emerging performance trends has been effective, as evidenced by improving attendance, reducing exclusions and increasing standards in Key Stage 4 this year. These show the school's sound capacity for further improvement. Not enough is done, however, to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching. Governors are now asking questions that are more searching about educational outcomes for learners, following recent local authority support to help raise expectations. However, until recently, the performance targets set for the school have been too modest, and have not been challenging enough to raise standards above the ordinary. This year's GCSE targets for 2008 are now very ambitious, and there is a collective sense of urgency to reach them as leaders at all levels review and support students who seem to be falling short.

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.

Inspection judgements

| | | |
|---|----------------|-------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall | 16-19 |
|---|----------------|-------|

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

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | 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 | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 | |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 | |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 | |
| 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 | 3 | |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | 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 | 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 | 4 | |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | 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 | 4 | |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes | 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

29 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Foxford School and Community Arts College, Coventry, CV6 6BB

Thank you for your time and the enthusiastic conversations we enjoyed during our visit to your school. You are benefiting from a sound education at Foxford and have a particularly good range of courses to study. Staff at the school work hard to provide effective care, guidance and support. Their commitment is clear from the large numbers of extra clubs and activities running outside of lesson time, and the range of productions, sports and other trips and visits you can enjoy.

Teachers are ensuring you are making the expected progress at all stages through the school, and the regular 'snapshots' are very useful in guiding your overall progress. The best lessons are lively and interesting, and you will remember them for many years. But sometimes there is not enough challenge to keep all of you interested. This gives a few irresponsible students the chance to distract others from learning. Their behaviour is disappointing, given the good attitudes you display around the school in general. Mostly your work is marked well, but not in every class. In the past the school has not set itself challenging enough targets (but that is changing, as Year 11 will testify!) and so standards have been slow to improve despite the school having good resources.

We have asked school leaders to use more rigorously the information they have about the quality of teaching, so that teachers more consistently plan lessons matched to your abilities and use day-to-day marking more effectively to tell you how to improve. The school should try to be as sensitive as possible to any concerns you may have about other students being unkind towards you.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright Her Majesty's Inspector



29 February 2008

Dear Students

**Inspection of Foxford School and Community Arts College, Coventry,
CV6 6BB**

Thank you for your time and the enthusiastic conversations we enjoyed during our visit to your school. You are benefiting from a sound education at Foxford and have a particularly good range of courses to study. Staff at the school work hard to provide effective care, guidance and support. Their commitment is clear from the large numbers of extra clubs and activities running outside of lesson time, and the range of productions, sports and other trips and visits you can enjoy.

Teachers are ensuring you are making the expected progress at all stages through the school, and the regular 'snapshots' are very useful in guiding your overall progress. The best lessons are lively and interesting, and you will remember them for many years. But sometimes there is not enough challenge to keep all of you interested. This gives a few irresponsible students the chance to distract others from learning. Their behaviour is disappointing, given the good attitudes you display around the school in general. Mostly your work is marked well, but not in every class. In the past the school has not set itself challenging enough targets (but that is changing, as Year 11 will testify!) and so standards have been slow to improve despite the school having good resources.

We have asked school leaders to use more rigorously the information they have about the quality of teaching, so that teachers more consistently plan lessons matched to your abilities and use day-to-day marking more effectively to tell you how to improve. The school should try to be as sensitive as possible to any concerns you may have about other students being unkind towards you.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector