

Foxhill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107432
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309398
Inspection date	10 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Jenkinson
Headteacher	Mrs A Bleasdale
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Brighouse and Denholme Road Queensbury Bradford West Yorkshire BD13 1LN
Telephone number	01274 882426
Fax number	01274 882106

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement; the quality of teaching throughout the school but particularly in Years 3 to 6; and pupils' achievements in writing by the end of Year 6. Evidence was gathered from the school's judgements about attainment on entry, test results, teachers' records, observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' current work and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school situated in a relatively advantaged area on the northern outskirts of Bradford. Most pupils come from the immediate area, but a sizeable minority travel from further afield. Almost all pupils are White British; those who are not speak English well. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. There is a small group with particular difficulties and/or disabilities. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is typical for their age. The school does not seek national awards, but makes sure that it meets the criteria for the national 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: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It is not yet outstanding overall because in Key Stage 2 progress in writing is satisfactory rather than good. Nevertheless, this aspect is beginning to improve as a result of the dedicated drive to raise standards.

Everyone connected with the school - parents, pupils, staff and governors - are justified in feeling proud of its successes. The first-rate support that is provided for pupils' personal development and well-being creates very well balanced and confident young people. Pupils on the school council are strong advocates for the school: asked to mark it out of ten, almost in unison, they respond with, 'eleven.' In conversation about the school's merits, pupils show their talent for communication. They readily list their love of learning, knowledge about keeping healthy and safe, the absence of bullying, the school's two large choirs and its strong emphasis on drama as key features behind their success. This positive view of the school is endorsed by inspection findings. Furthermore, a typical opinion from parents points to a school with 'a great ethos, which encourages children to express themselves in so many ways: choir, drama and art'. All this is achieved through some talented teaching in the creative arts, rigorous systems for care and magnificent opportunities to sing publicly and create top quality plays.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and pupils' overall achievement is good. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection. Gains have been quicker in mathematics and science than in English where pupils' progress in writing has lagged behind that of other areas. The school has tackled this relative weakness by putting in place methods designed to strengthen pupils' sentence construction, use of vocabulary and punctuation. As a result, current progress in writing at Year 6 is good and pupils are on course to reach some ambitious targets. It is in Years 3 to 5 that progress in writing is no better than satisfactory, limiting pupils attaining consistently above average standards by the end of Year 6.

Despite the issues related to writing, some groups of pupils are learning quickly such as those with specific difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's care and support for these pupils elicits comments from parents like, 'we cannot thank the school enough.' This is due to the rigour shown in identifying how best to help them, the planning of useful programmes to meet their needs and extremely effective links with outside agencies.

The headteacher, leadership team and governing body know the school exceptionally well. They possess a wealth of experience with which to steer the school through challenging periods. There was a time, since the last inspection, when staffing difficulties combined with a spate of temporary teaching caused a lack of momentum and low achievement among older pupils. This has now been addressed. The sense of direction, teamwork and commitment to making Foxhill a very successful school are most apparent. To this end, the school has recently tried to improve the degree in which pupils understand what they are aiming for in lessons and how to achieve any targets they may be set. The system is a good one in terms of guidance for academic success. Some pupils are racing ahead in this respect. For example, in Year 2, the 'Doctor Who and the Dalek' theme not only enthralled pupils but links targets to the work very effectively to help them improve. Equally, in Year 6, pupils are motivated enormously by high expectations established through teaching, as well as the improvement targets they set themselves when evaluating their own and each other's work. However, throughout the school, not all pupils enjoy the same level of involvement: some are unsure of their next steps because targets set in marking, for example, are too general or vague.

The school has progressed well since its last inspection in 2004 when it was judged as satisfactory. Teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management are all good now. Governors have undertaken valuable training and are now good at asking the right questions to spur the school on. The progress made to date, including the outstanding features, demonstrates a capacity to continue moving forward and good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage gives children a good start. They attain slightly above nationally expected levels by the end of Reception after a broadly typical start. They make especially good progress in their communication skills and emotional development, which are often below the levels expected nationally for their age when they first start. Thus, progress and achievement are good. Since the last inspection, good leadership and management has created a Foundation Stage unit in which Nursery and Reception children learn alongside each other in a high quality setting that accentuates play and investigation. For example, at any one moment, some children may be dressed up at the mini-beasts safari lookout post using binoculars to spot the creatures, while others are panning through soil, seeking plastic mini-beasts. Others talk fervently with adults about the mathematics behind doubling numbers. The unit is a hive of activity in which children experience a beneficial and exciting curriculum. In response to the stimulating activities, children behave very well and are highly motivated. Typically, as staff are proud to note, children say things like, 'I have tried really hard and this is my best work.' The school has rightly judged outdoor provision as satisfactory, but staff are working hard to improve this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in writing within Key Stage 2 so that standards in this aspect of English, by the end of Year 6, are above average.
- Ensure that all pupils understand their targets and can judge the progress they are making towards them.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you for your help when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit because everyone was so friendly. You go to a good school, which is outstanding in some respects.

The children who spoke to me at break and lunchtime convinced me that some things about Foxhill are really special. I cannot remember when I last visited a school with such a large number of pupils in the school choirs. Not only that, you are so successful. While I was with you, the local newspaper had a big story about your singing at Bradford University. Furthermore, the fantastic opportunity to do drama regularly to such a high standard has an enormous influence on your confidence and ability to relate to others. I well remember asking the school council what they thought of the school and then not speaking much for 20 minutes while they told me. I enjoyed myself in every part of the school from witnessing the 'whoops of joy' in Foundation Stage when children spotted a woodlouse, to seeing Year 6 pupils write bold, complex sentences with powerful opening clauses.

The children that I spoke to at morning break told me how much you all care about good behaviour and helping out in the school. The list of ways in which you can contribute is a long one, for example: various monitors; reading partners; school council; pen pals with children in Prague; choir members; and assistants in the 'play in a day' scheme.

I am suggesting two things for the school to do to become even better. Firstly, to increase the rate of progress you make in writing in Key Stage 2. Secondly, to involve you all far more in thinking about how well you are doing in your learning. You can all help by trying hard to improve your sentences, vocabulary and punctuation. Also, by making sure that you know exactly what targets you are aiming at and how close you are to reaching them.

Best wishes to you all and I look forward to seeing some of you singing or acting on the stage in London in years to come.