

Foxhills Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115956
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312122
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Pye

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Arscott
Headteacher	Mr Mike Espezel
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Foxhills Lane Colbury Southampton SO40 7ED
Telephone number	02380 292126
Fax number	02380 293092

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school, has below the expected number of girls. It draws pupils from a wide catchment area and all but a few pupils come from a White British background. There are well below the average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. However, the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) is above average. The school is recognised nationally through, amongst others, the Healthy Schools, Silver Artsmark and FA Charter Awards.

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. The majority of parents agreed, and one wrote, 'The atmosphere is very positive and encourages participation and involvement on all levels. There are opportunities for pupils to develop a range of skills which help them grow as young people'. This accurately reflects how the school successfully develops the personal and social, as well the academic aspects of each child. Pupils' personal development is good, and the pastoral care of pupils is very effective. Consequently, pupils say they feel safe, secure and that adults respect them.

Pupils enter the school with average standards. At the end of Year 6 in the 2007 national tests, pupils achieved very well and attained well above average standards in science and above average in mathematics and English. This continued the improving trend of recent years. Good teaching and positive pupil attitudes have contributed to this progress. Also, effective monitoring has led to the early identification of pupils requiring additional help, and a good range of support strategies are used to ensure their good achievement.

A further reason why pupils achieve well is the good teaching they receive. In some outstanding lessons, pupils are very well challenged, and they benefit from planning that addresses their different learning styles, recognising in particular, the need for some pupils to learn in an active way. Inconsistencies in how some teacher's use assessment information prevent pupils from clearly knowing the next steps in their learning, and progress consequently slows.

Pupils say they enjoy school, that lessons are 'fun' and that they have good, different activities to do in lessons. The school provides a good curriculum, with strong enhancement, that includes some popular sporting activities. These motivate pupils and adds well to their social and personal development. A parent wrote that, 'There have been significant improvements in the past three and a half years, particularly in the increased opportunities for extra-curricular activities and clubs'.

The very good level of pastoral care contributes significantly to the good personal development of pupils. Pupils tell of occasional lapses in behaviour, but that overall, pupils behave well. They have an excellent knowledge of how to stay safe, linking their knowledge to physical education, science and safe practices outside the school.

Academic support and guidance for pupils is satisfactory and improving. Pupils have learning targets, and those for literacy are reinforced well in subjects such as history. However, not all teachers refer to them in their marking, and some targets are not specific enough to be helpful to pupils. Consequently, whilst pupils obtain encouragement from marking, they are not always made sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

The headteacher has overseen good improvement since the last inspection, with, for example, the quality of teaching and standards in science and English improving. Subject manager's roles have been extended. They are now involved in monitoring and evaluating learning, but with less emphasis on the quality of teaching. Therefore, opportunities are missed to share the best practice. Governance is good, and governors are increasingly acting as the critical friend of the school. The capacity to improve the school is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Address the inconsistencies in marking so that pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

- Continue to develop the role of managers to ensure that the best practice in teaching and use of assessment is shared more consistently throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good teaching and positive pupil attitudes help to ensure the good achievement of pupils. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average in science, mathematics and English. The school recently identified that some high ability pupils were not achieving as they might. This resulted in a successful focus on ensuring that tasks consistently challenge all pupils. The impact of this management initiative is shown in the above average numbers of pupils now gaining the higher grades, for example, in science in the 2007 tests. Tracking data shows all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties, and minority ethnic groups, achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop well both as learners and individuals, are articulate and show respect for each other's views. Older pupils act as good role models for younger children, and help them responsibly as 'buddies'. Pupils enjoy responsibility such as when they raise money for charities or act as school councillors. They are proud of their success in influencing areas such as canteen provision. Some opportunities are missed for older pupils to be even more involved in the running of the school, such as having more input into assessing the quality of learning in the school. They talk knowledgeably about how to stay healthy. Pupils enjoy school, not least for the friendships they form and the range of curriculum enrichment activities. Attendance is average, and the school works hard to reduce unauthorised absence. Pupils have good standards of basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' relationships and aptitude for cooperative learning are particular strengths. The school successfully encourages pupils' awareness of the multicultural dimension of life in contemporary Britain through activities such as 'Islam week', when they study a Muslim perspective on society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching builds on the positive attitude that pupils bring to lessons, and fosters the good achievement of all groups of learners. In the best lessons, teachers use briskly paced and challenging activities to motivate pupils and keep them all on task. There are good opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively. For instance, in mathematics, older pupils planned coordinates together and younger pupils worked on practical solutions to direction finding. Consequently, they made good progress in a short space of time. Teachers use a good range of questioning to develop understanding, and to encourage speaking and listening skills. Good relationships are established and pupils are willing to participate. In the minority of satisfactory lessons, teachers' expectations are insufficiently high, and assessment information is not used sufficiently well to match work to the ability range of learners, and consequently progress slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils with learning difficulties receive well-targeted support, whilst able pupils have opportunities, such as visits to the local specialist science secondary school. Such provision is very good, and consequently all pupils achieve well. There is a good take-up of extracurricular clubs in activities such as sport, sewing and the choir. Pupils talk enthusiastically about music, their productions and ICT provision. The school makes good use of outside specialists such as professional football coaching. Good provision for personal, social, and health education, for example through the use of circle time, has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Some other curriculum developments are at a relatively early stage: for example, in providing for the teaching of modern foreign languages. Although some curriculum planning gives good guidance on what content is to be delivered, links to the desired learning outcomes are inconsistent.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Although care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, pastoral care is very good. Pupils say they feel safe, and know who to go to if they have a problem. Whilst a minority of parents expressed some concern over behaviour, most feel that their children are safe and well cared for. One pupil said, 'The school is strict if you are naughty but gives you lots of praise if you're good'. Close links with the infant and secondary schools help ensure that the transfer of pupils is smooth and that pupils settle quickly. Learning support assistants, working with small groups for example, contribute well to the good achievement of pupils with learning problems. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly, and appropriate support introduced. However, not all teachers are using the information gained well enough to make plain to pupils what the next steps are in their learning. Also, the quality of marking is variable. At its best, there is good guidance through oral feedback and marking, and monitoring ensures that pupils act on the advice given. Not all teachers do this. Although most teachers praise good work they do not always indicate why it is good, or refer consistently to pupils' learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Behind the school's good academic standards and successful pastoral care is a leadership team that provides a clear guide to day-to-day activities, and to the future direction for the school. Consequently, staff are well aware of the developmental priorities, and teamwork is secure. Monitoring is based on a good self-evaluation cycle, often conducted by the extended management team. This resulted, for example, in the identification of the need for, and introduction of, a more effective system for tracking pupils' progress. It is used particularly well in mathematics, to identify, for example, the progress of high attainers. The impact of some of their developments, for example, when they introduce new resources, are not always clear enough, because not enough attention is paid to identifying measurable success criteria. Governors visit the school regularly, and have developed a good knowledge of the school through such developments as increasing the links with subject managers.

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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?	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	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?	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

18 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxhills Junior School, Southampton, SO40 7ED

Thank you for your welcome when we visited your school. You were keen to tell us about how much you like your school life. You certainly enjoyed and worked hard during the fund-raising 'Aerobathon'. Well done!

We agree with you that you go to a good school. We liked the way you make good progress with your work. You do well because you have positive attitudes to your work, but also you receive good teaching. You told us that lessons are 'fun' and that you have interesting activities to do in those lessons. The Tudor work you do looks very enjoyable!

You have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy - well done to the play leaders who help you exercise during breaks. You also showed us that you have a very good idea about how to stay safe. The school helps you develop well as young people. Some parents felt that behaviour was not good, but you told us that pupils behave well, and that the adults deal quickly with any incidents. You behaved well during our time in the school. You told us, and we agree, that the adults care for you very well.

All staff in the school want you to do well and are always looking to improve things. You have already benefited from the new way that the school keeps an eye on how well you progress. Many of you are given good extra support to help you to do even better.

Even good schools can get better. We have asked that your school examine two things to help them improve things further. We have asked that when teachers mark your work, they all give you a clear idea about what you must do to improve. You can help by telling your teachers when you find the work too easy or too hard. There are many good things going on in lessons, and we have asked the school to see how managers can help all teachers learn about these.

On behalf of the team of inspectors, we wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Pye

Lead Inspector