

Foxwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119057
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313170
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Farrell

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Boarding provision	
Social care URN	
Social care inspector	Angela Gunning

The inspection of social care was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	121
Sixth form	19
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Yvonne Parry
Headteacher	Christopher Soulsby

Age group	2–19
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2008
Inspection number	313170

Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Seabrook Road Hythe CT21 5QJ
Telephone number	01303 261155
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors and a Social Care Inspector.

Description of the school

Foxwood is a day and residential community special school for boys and girls aged 2 to 19 years. All pupils have statements of special educational needs or are being assessed for one. Their attainment on entry is well below average. Pupils have a range of disabilities and disorders including severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, and autism. Most pupils are White British and around 10% are of other ethnic origins. There are eight pupils who speak English as an additional language and seven pupils are cared for by the local authority. About one in ten pupils is resident at the school. Pupils over 16 years are based at a site in Cheriton several miles from the rest of the school and are divided into two groups, with one group using facilities in the local college of further education for most of the week. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are based at the main site in Hythe in a children's centre shared by education and health services. The school has an outreach service supporting pupils with a statement of special educational needs in mainstream schools. Some Foxwood pupils have opportunities to attend mainstream schools and some mainstream pupils have opportunities to be educated at Foxwood. The school achieved specialist status for cognition and learning in January 2008. It is in the very early stages of developing a federation with another special school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Foxwood is a good school. It is well led and managed by staff whose roles are clear and who work closely as a team. The school has good checking procedures that are used well to monitor and evaluate its performance. Governors combine effective support with suitable challenge and are very committed to the school. Partnerships with other schools and the local community are very strong. These are helped by the excellent work done by the school's outreach service, whose work includes supporting pupils from Foxwood learning in mainstream schools. Partnership with parents, despite considerable efforts by the school, remains no better than satisfactory and a significant number of parents have negative views of the provision. There are rigorous systems in place to check on the quality of teaching, the curriculum and leadership and management. These areas have significantly improved since the previous inspection and demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

The standards of pupils' attainment on entry to the school, and throughout their schooling, are well below average because of their special educational needs. Their progress is good and they achieve well. They quickly settle in the well led EYFS because provision is good. They make good progress because activities are interesting, challenging and enjoyable. This strong progress and good achievement continue throughout the school and into the sixth form because teaching is consistently good. The sixth form's use of the local college of further education makes a significant contribution to the good provision.

Pupils' good personal development and well-being reflect the good care, guidance and support they receive. Pupils feel safe because of the trusting relationships between each other, and between pupils and adults. They enjoy school and know the activities they like best, which is reflected in their good attendance and behaviour. They develop good understanding relating to money and good life skills because these are a key part of the curriculum. Pupils are increasingly aware of the needs of others, whether it is members of their class group, or people in the community. When they can, they help one another. Because the school emphasises the importance of physical activities and healthy eating, pupils are increasingly aware of the importance of these and enthusiastically participate in physical activities. The good boarding provision contributes well to the personal and social development of resident pupils. The school's child protection and risk assessment procedures are rigorous. The close team work of staff helps make pupils feel safe and secure. Work is routinely assessed and information on pupils' progress is collected and analysed so that targets can be set to challenge pupils further. However, data analysis is not used consistently well to raise standards. For example in the EYFS, existing data are not always as fully used as they could be and in the sixth form, the range of data is not wide enough.

The curriculum is well thought out and carefully developed into effective lesson planning. Special attention is paid to developing pupils' communication, personal, social and basic skills without neglecting areas such as music and the arts which pupils also enjoy. Teaching is good because staff work closely together, and lessons are generally well paced and interesting which engages pupils. Any challenging behaviour is managed effectively because staff are well trained and supported. Teaching breaks down learning into small steps which help pupils learn well.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students make good progress academically and in their personal development because of the good provision. They develop confidence because of the wide range of opportunities and activities to develop their skills for daily living and leisure. This is linked to suitable forms of accreditation, which are regularly reviewed. Many students understand about healthy foods and why they should eat them. They are developing stronger understanding about how to keep safe, for example in using the internet. They respond well to the good teaching in lessons with a clear purpose such as preparing to use transport through discussion and role play. The comparatively new leadership of the sixth form has a clear vision of its direction and is developing it well. The provision benefits from the use of the local college of further education for one of the two groups. The gathering of information on students' progress is not as comprehensive in the sixth form as it is in other phases, and this restricts the extent to which it can be used to improve learning and raise standards.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS is effectively and enthusiastically led and managed and benefits from very strong teamwork among staff including very close working with other services. The provision is strengthened from being part of a multi-disciplinary children's centre. Children settle in well and make good progress because learning activities and experiences are tailored well to what they require and engage their interest. They feel safe and respond well to the caring and encouraging ethos. Staff work hard to keep parents informed of their children's progress and achievement, for example through well-presented home-school books. Lessons are well organised, children enjoy learning and try hard. Communication is well developed through signing, and a strong emphasis on speaking and listening to others. The information on the progress and development of children is not used as fully as it could be to inform the planning of teaching and learning and improve children's progress.

Effectiveness of boarding provision

Grade: 2

The residential provision at Foxwood School is good and all key National Minimum Standards are met. Shortfalls identified during the previous social care inspection have been addressed. These include all staff receiving child protection awareness, implementing a clear medication audit trail, and developing an Individual Care, Health and Learning Plan (ICHLP) to ensure each child has a health plan. Improvements have also been made to the residential accommodation and there are now sufficient bathing and showering facilities provided.

The school actively promotes the children's good health and well-being, for example through the personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum and by organising healthy living events such as smoothie days, packed lunch competition and fruity Friday. The children's physical, emotional and healthcare needs are well considered and national Healthy Schools status has been achieved. Each child has an ICHLP, which encompasses all aspects of their healthcare needs. Children are provided with a good, healthy balanced diet that meets their dietary needs and choices. There is a clear medication audit trail that is monitored by the head of care to ensure the young people's medication needs are managed well.

There are good health and safety procedures to safeguard the children. Arrangements for fire safety are effective, although fire drills are not being recorded in a consistent way. Recruitment procedures are thorough and robust and the children's safety and welfare are protected by the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures. There are five designated child protection coordinators and all staff have a sound understanding of their child protection and safeguarding responsibilities. However, there is insufficient information being recorded.. There are measures in place to respect children's privacy, although not all information is appropriately filed. A clear and accessible complaints procedure is in place and staff advocate well for the children to ensure they can express their concerns or complaints.

Staff are skilled at helping the children with their emotional and behavioural development through good behaviour management strategies. All children have an agreed behaviour management programme, including appropriate sanctions. Staff are appropriately trained to manage severe challenging behaviours using Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention. There are good arrangements to prevent or deal with bullying to ensure the children are accommodated within a safe and respectful environment.

The children are given excellent individual support and guidance through a competent and committed staff team. There is an effective care planning system that assesses and reviews the children's needs appropriately. Staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs and use effective communication skills to engage appropriately with them. There is an effective 24 hour curriculum to ensure the children's education is promoted well and they are assisted in reaching their potential.

The promotion of equality and diversity at Foxwood School is good. The school has good systems in place for children to communicate their views and make choices and decisions. There is an active school council and children are encouraged to communicate in their preferred manner with each other and with adults. There are good contact arrangements with family and friends. Children are admitted to and leave the school in a sensitive and planned manner. The children are provided with comfortable, relaxed and child-friendly accommodation, but the locks on toilet and bathing facilities are not appropriate.

Detailed information is given to the children and their relatives about the services and facilities provided by Foxwood School. The school has a very proactive approach towards training. There is a competent and committed staff team and good staffing levels to provide consistency of care to meet the needs of the children. There are effective quality assurance processes to monitor the school's services and facilities. The governing body plays a significant and active role in the monitoring and support of the school leadership. External organisations such as Action for Children and Kent County Council also carry out visits to the school to monitor standards.

National Minimum Standards to be met to improve social care

Ensure all information pertaining to each child is appropriately filed (National Minimum Standard 3)

Record in detail the outcome of any referral made to Social Services (National Minimum Standard 5)

Ensure the system for recording incidents is robust and audited (National Minimum Standard 5)

Provide appropriate locks on toilet and bathing facilities (National Minimum Standard 25)

Record fire drills in a consistent way (National Minimum Standard 26)

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve partnership with parents.
- Ensure data on pupils' progress are fully and accurately used throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards remain below average throughout the pupils' schooling because of their special educational needs. Building on the strong start they make in the EYFS, pupils maintain their good progress throughout all phases including the sixth form because of the consistently good teaching. Improvements, including the use of timetables with symbols and the Picture Exchange Communication System (a means of using symbols for communication), have strengthened progress in pupils' communication skills. Good overall progress is evident for different groups of pupils including those with different learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and children looked after by the local authority. Boarding pupils also make good progress, benefiting from the activities and care the residential provision offers. Pupils meet challenging targets set by the school. The accreditation offered for students in the sixth form is appropriate but limited. The school is rightly keeping accreditation under review and extending it for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils feel secure and benefit from the warm relationships between themselves and adults. Some can say how to keep safe and to whom they would go for help. They respond well to encouragement to eat healthily and enjoy opportunities for physical activities such as 'Wake up and Shake up' sessions. They are developing understanding of money and self-care well. This is because of the good progress they make in basic skills such as communication and mathematics, and because of the opportunities for work experience for older pupils. They greatly enjoy the wide range of activities offered by the school and this is reflected in their good behaviour in and out of lessons and by their good attendance. Interventions used when managing behaviour, including challenging behaviour, are analysed and used to improve behaviour management. Some pupils can say what right and wrong actions are. Pupils contribute to the school community well, for example some are members of the school council, and the school successfully improves efforts to communicate so pupils can express their views and make choices. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, cultural development is encouraged well by the range of music and art offered including, during the inspection, a concert with Gamelan instruments.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding but were mainly good. Teaching is good overall from EYFS through all key stages and into the sixth form because the school has good systems of tackling any identified weaknesses. Among the general strengths of teaching and learning are the effective encouragement of

communication, including the use of aids as necessary, such as electronically aided speech, signing and the use of symbols. Teaching assistants and teachers work very closely together and lessons are well structured because planning is clear. Relationships are very good. The very high pupil to adult ratio and the extensive training staff have received enable effective management of challenging behaviour. However, opportunities to encourage pupils' independence are sometimes missed. This is because staff sometimes give too much help to pupils with things they are capable of doing, for example sitting down or cutting out paper shapes. The school is innovatively developing specific approaches for some pupils, such as analysing the task to be achieved and breaking it into small steps.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well designed for the learning and personal requirements of pupils. It has a strong emphasis on communication, personal and social education, and basic skills such as mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Physical activities in which pupils participate well are also encouraged. Music is greatly enjoyed and makes a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment. Clear leadership responsibilities for the curriculum in each key stage help ensure the curriculum continues to develop suitably for pupils of different ages. The close working of the staff leading these areas ensures the curriculum is linked together well. Schemes of work are clear and skilfully adapted into structured lesson plans. The community is well used to enrich learning further. However, activities are not always as relevant as they could be; for example, in mathematics, some tasks do not always relate sufficiently to everyday life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support for pupils is good, aided by good relationships between pupils and adults. Childcare procedures are securely in place and the school meets requirements for the safeguarding of pupils. These are helped by the progress the school has made in developing pupils' communication skills so that they can better communicate their needs and preferences. Thorough risk assessments are made as appropriate. Careful records are kept of pupils' progress and of behaviour and any interventions made. Analysis and discussion of this data have contributed significantly to reductions in the number of interventions. The data on pupils' achievement are analysed for the whole school and used to track progress and set targets for the future. The school has made considerable progress in this area since the previous inspection and the system generally works well. However, the school sometimes overestimates rates of pupils' progress, for example interpreting the progress of a pupil as outstanding when it is in fact good. Consequently, the opportunity to improve teaching and other aspects of provision further is sometimes not recognised.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management have helped the school to achieve specialist school status in the area of Cognition and Learning and have improved many aspects of provision. This is because senior and middle managers work very well together. They are clear about their roles and the school has a clear vision of where it wants to go. It sets targets for staff and their

performance that are challenging and are backed up by extensive support and training, to which the school is very committed. The school's self-evaluation is secure and accurate. Pupils have equal opportunities to achieve well. As a result, there are no significant, unexplained differences in the progress made by different groups of pupils. Governors make a valuable contribution and support and challenge the school well. In its comparatively new role as a specialist school, Foxwood is further developing its links with and support for other schools. Partnerships with other schools and members of the community are excellent and the highly respected and valued outreach service makes a very strong contribution to this.

Partnership with parents is no better than satisfactory. Although many parents value the school, about one in ten holds negative views. The school's considerable efforts to improve this since the previous inspection have not had enough impact. The school rightly proposes to liaise with the local authority to improve the situation, including developing services for parents and employing a family-school liaison worker.

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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	16-19
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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	2
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 effectiveness of boarding provision	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2	
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2	

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxwood School, Hythe, CT21 5QJ

It was good to meet you when my colleagues and I came to inspect your school recently. Thank you for talking to us and helping us.

Foxwood is a good school. It is well led and the teaching is good. You told us you enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. The school cares for you well and supports you well in your learning. The boarding setting, the centre for the youngest children, and your sixth form are all good.

There are two things the school could do even better so we have asked the staff to:

- work more closely with your parents
- make sure the information about how well you are doing is used as fully as possible to help you do even better.

It was lovely to see you all.

With every good wish for your future

Yours faithfully

Lead inspector