

# Foxes Piece School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131523
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	315821
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah McDermott

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	92
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs P Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs C A Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 February 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Newfield Road Marlow SL7 1JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 483 455
<b>Fax number</b>	01628 477 005

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Foxes Piece School is a small primary school situated on a housing estate on the edge of the town of Marlow. It has a higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than other primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few pupils have a mother tongue other than English. The proportion of pupils who need extra help because they learn slowly or have behaviour difficulties is higher than the average. The school has gained several awards, including the National Healthy School Award and the Early Years Quality Assurance Award. The school has a separate Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and mixed-age classes for all other year groups. There is an on-site day-care nursery (Red Fox Day Nursery) and a pre-school (Stepping Stones) which are not managed by the governing body.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Foxes Piece School is a satisfactory school. Children make a good start in the EYFS and make good progress, given their generally low starting points. They enter Year 1 with skills that are below expectations for their age and make satisfactory progress, to leave Year 6 with standards below the national average in English, mathematics and science. Girls and boys make similar progress. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels in their national tests at Year 2 or Year 6.

Parents are pleased that their children are happy and well cared for. One parent commented, 'Staff always put the well-being of the children first', and another wrote, 'I wouldn't want my child to attend any other school'. Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school knows the family community very well and supports pupils and parents with sensitivity and good practical advice. It is particularly good at supporting pupils who are vulnerable or who easily become frustrated. Consequently, pupils who attend the Nurture Group are coming on in leaps and bounds in their social skills.

The personal development of all pupils is good. Pupils know how to lead healthy and safe lives. They, and all staff, take part particularly enthusiastically in the daily 'Wake up and shake up' routine. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and get on well with their teachers. One girl reported, 'It's like a big family here!' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Staff manage behaviour well and are adept at diffusing possible incidents, with the result that pupils are invariably sensible and orderly. The school has worked effectively with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. Rates of attendance are now good. There is a genuine community feel in the school, as older pupils willingly take on responsibilities and help the younger pupils at lunch.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make more than satisfactory progress. Teachers are well organised and plan the activities carefully. Work is satisfactorily matched to different ability groups, but is not always at a sufficiently individual level to ensure the more able achieve what they are capable of. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is well adapted for the pupils in the Nurture Group. Opportunities for writing have improved since the last inspection. Nevertheless, there has been insufficient evaluation of the curriculum to see why some pupils do not make expected progress. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers mark work carefully and add encouraging comments.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team to ensure that problems outside school do not detract from the pupils' happiness in school. Leaders know what is going well and what needs improving. However, they are not yet consistently checking that all activities and projects are having a positive impact on raising standards and achievement. They are starting to set more realistic and challenging targets to ensure that the more able reach their potential. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception class. The majority enter with skills that are well below those of most children of the same age, particularly in communication, language and

literacy, and personal development. Although by the time they move on to Year 1, their skills are below national expectations, this represents good achievement from their starting points. The teacher and teaching assistant work well together to provide caring yet stimulating surroundings and activities. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore and have a go at activities that they have not experienced before. The staff do not let mud and rain prevent children finding out more - rows of wellington boots are on hand! They carefully organise sessions of literacy and numeracy for just the right length of time. As a result, children make particularly good progress in linking sounds and letters. Adults converse with children in a relaxed way, but also ensure that children speak clearly in sentences to promote their language skills. The welfare of the children is excellent. Children are extremely safe and sound. The Reception class is managed well. The new leader is quickly getting to grips with useful ways to gauge the progress of the children. She is aware that links with the neighbouring pre-school, as well as a smoother transition to Year 1, are not fully established so as to build up a positive foundation for productive and smooth learning later on.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is more consistently good, so as to raise standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that the more-able pupils have more opportunities to enable them to reach higher levels.
- Ensure that development planning routinely identifies the impact of strategic decisions on pupils' academic achievement.

A small proportion of 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**

In 2007, standards were below the national average for reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, standards were below average in English, mathematics and science. At both key stages, very few pupils attained the higher levels. Pupils made satisfactory progress overall from their starting points. In 2008, although the previous three years had shown an upward trend, standards for pupils in Key Stage 1 dipped, and were exceptionally low for reading, writing and mathematics. However, the unvalidated national tests for Key Stage 2 indicate that pupils reached levels below the national average in all three subjects and achieved satisfactorily over their time in school. As with previous years, too few pupils gained the higher levels.

Currently, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with behavioural difficulties, achieve satisfactorily. The small number of pupils who do not speak English at home, or who are from different ethnic backgrounds, also make satisfactory progress. However, more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in all subjects.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they have plenty of friends and can turn to adults if they have any worries. They are polite and chatty, and are good ambassadors for their school. Although there are a few pupils who on occasion find it difficult to concentrate or relate to others appropriately, behaviour is good and pupils move around sensibly and safely. Pupils know right from wrong and are well involved in devising and supporting the school rules. They are confident that bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively should it occur. Pupils are starting to grow in their knowledge of other cultures and faiths. The pupils in the Nurture Group, in their Indian topic, enthusiastically talked about auto-rickshaws and bullock carts, and excitedly prepared perfumed sweets. In assembly, all the pupils quietly and respectfully bowed their heads during the time for reflection. Pupils eat healthy packed lunches, and take a good amount of exercise by walking to school or joining the active after-school clubs. The older pupils are proud of their roles as house captains. They relish the chance to run stalls to raise money for charities and their library. However, pupils would like more of a say in running the school council and organising where they sit at lunchtimes. Pupils' sound achievement in literacy and numeracy are preparing them satisfactorily for moving on to secondary school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. At times, the quality of lessons can be good, but the consistency is not even across the school. Teachers have built up good relationships, so pupils feel comfortable and at ease in their learning. Most pupils try hard to please their teachers, although there are a few who lack interest when the pace of the lesson slows. Teachers manage behaviour well, so learning is rarely disrupted. Teaching assistants give pupils encouraging support, but on occasion do not give sufficiently accurate academic guidance. Teachers plan activities well to capture pupils' imagination. In a good lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils improved their speaking, listening and writing skills by pretending to be TV interviewers and presenting news reports. However, although teachers match work satisfactorily to the needs of most groups of pupils, the more-able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve more.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Activities both in and out of lessons help pupils to make satisfactory academic progress. Pupils who need extra support with their learning benefit from special computer programs or individual attention with reading. With the falling roll, the school has moved to mixed-age range teaching. It ensures that all pupils cover the required syllabus, but there is still scope for the school to check that class organisation is sufficiently effective in helping all pupils to make at least expected progress. Writing is well threaded into lessons beyond literacy. For example, the older pupils wrote vivid letters and diaries, and devised ration books in their history lessons. However, in some subjects too many worksheets hinder the more able from writing freely at length. The promotion of personal, social and health education is good and results in well-rounded pupils. The school provides many opportunities for pupils that they might not otherwise experience.

Pupils enjoy trips to such places as the Hendon Air Museum and the theatre, as well as participating in a good range of sporting and active clubs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides outstanding pastoral care. It has built up great expertise in supporting pupils who are having problems at home, so that they can still enjoy coming to school. Staff make good use of outside professionals to provide specific advice. New pupils settle in quickly because of the genuine warmth shown to every individual. Staff follow procedures carefully to ensure that the safety, health and welfare of pupils are paramount. Academic guidance is improving. In lessons, pupils know what they should achieve by the end, and are starting to check their own and each other's work. The older pupils were able to describe their targets for longer-term learning, but the younger ones were less clear about how they could improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher leads a committed and caring staff in a happy school where discrimination is not tolerated. She and her senior team put great store on pupils learning to be valuable members of the community, whether in school or beyond. One parent stated, typically of many other similar comments, 'Foxes Piece is a credit to the community'. The headteacher and her new deputy headteacher are improving their use of data to anticipate where to provide extra support to prevent dips in achievement. Nevertheless, they are not yet sufficiently confident in judging the school's achievement against other schools nationally. Leaders and managers, including governors, are clear about the main priorities for improvement. They are starting to be more rigorous in ensuring that the precise impact of any planned school development on the pupils' achievement is what determines its success. The newly introduced governors' marketing committee is working determinedly to raise pupil numbers. The school meets all safeguarding requirements.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### 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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

06 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxes Piece School, Marlow, SL7 1JW

Thank you very much for helping me on the inspection by talking to me and showing me what you can do. Your parents are pleased with your school because they believe that you are happy and in safe hands. I definitely agree.

You go to a satisfactory school. Standards in English, mathematics and science are lower than in other schools, but you are making satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory. Those of you who find settling down to learning difficult are given good support to improve your personal and social skills. I especially enjoyed visiting the Nurture Group and seeing the members making Indian sweets. Your teachers and helpers make learning fun, and they organise lessons well. Mrs Taylor and her team of senior teachers lead the school satisfactorily.

You told me that you like coming to school, and I am not surprised. Behaviour is good, and you get on well with your teachers and friends. I am pleased that you know how to lead healthy and safe lives. I especially like the way you are developing as responsible young people and have improved your attendance. It is not every day that I see pupils and teachers keenly taking part in 'Wake up and shake up' to help freshen up brains for the learning day ahead!

To make your education better, I have asked your school to do three things:

- make sure that more of your lessons are at least good, in order to improve your standards in English, mathematics and science
- give those of you who find learning easy more opportunities to reach higher levels in your work and tests
- make sure that school organisation and plans are always successful in helping you to achieve better.

I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to your school. I know that your teachers make your school a special place for you. You can do your bit by continuing to be very positive and by making the most of your time at Foxes Piece School.

Yours faithfully

Sarah McDermott

Lead Inspector