

# Foxdell Junior School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	109577
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	324983
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Smith HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Sajjad Haider
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne McMulkin
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 June 2006
School address	Dallow Road Luton Bedfordshire LU1 1UP
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at various school documents and 88 completed parent questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- achievement and standards of pupils learning English as an additional language
- support for pupils to improve English language skills across the curriculum
- how well leadership and management at all levels have brought about sustained improvements.

## Information about the school

Foxdell Junior School is a popular community school. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and nearly all are learning to speak English as an additional language. A large proportion of pupils are asylum seekers or refugees. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than that found nationally. The school is one of six primary pilot specialist physical education (PE) schools in the country. It has a number of prestigious awards including Investors in Families.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

### Main findings

The display outside the Year 3 classrooms which states 'Fantastic Foxdell' is true. This is an outstanding school which serves its local community excellently. Relationships are of the highest order. The mutual respect between staff and pupils is palpable and this ensures pupils feel greatly valued and they respond by behaving excellently.

The school has worked extremely well to improve standards. In mathematics and science, standards have risen markedly since the previous inspection and are now average in mathematics and above average in science. Standards in English are lower but still broadly average. The progress pupils make is good, especially those with little or no English when they arrive in school because all staff are very supportive. Teaching is excellent with many lessons seen being judged outstanding. However the school is not complacent and is working hard to ensure even more teaching is of the highest standard. Assessment is highly effective in identifying how well pupils are doing. But pupils are not given sufficient ownership of identifying what needs to be improved and setting their own targets.

The very strong strategic direction from the senior leadership team, along with their accurate self-evaluation and the constant drive to ensure all areas continue to get better, demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve further. Staff realise that the high expectations made of them, together with the rigorous monitoring of the work of the school, quickly and accurately identifies what needs to be improved next.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English by ensuring pupils take greater responsibility for identifying areas for improvement and setting themselves appropriate targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with standards that are below average. Many join at times other than the start of Year 3 and these pupils often have little or no understanding of English. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average in English and

mathematics and above average in science. Pupils make good progress because they really enjoy school. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress but often their written work is weaker than their reading or speaking.

Pupils' spiritual development is outstanding because of the empathy, tolerance and understanding they show. Opportunities for reflection are fully taken up and there is a great deal of respect for the use of the prayer room which has come about through the intervention of the highly effective school council. Moral and social development are also outstanding as shown by impeccable behaviour, an astute understanding of moral issues and the strong emphasis on social activities, clubs, sports and whole family events. Being part of the PE pilot has also supported excellent social interaction as well as ensuring pupils have a high degree of fitness. This is enhanced by the daily fitness sessions prior to afternoon school, along with the calming influence of the whole school taking part in a Tai Chi exercise routine.

The school utilises its pupils' rich cultural heritage to extremely good effect. The art awards, the strong emphasis on music and dance from a multitude of cultures and the absolute commitment to ethnic and cultural harmony within school and beyond ensure pupils have an excellent understanding of different cultures. Visits with parents to the countryside and the seaside also mean that pupils have a good understanding of British culture.

Attendance is well above average with very few pupils having a lot of time off school. Pupils are prepared well for the next phase of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils made good and often outstanding progress in the lessons observed. This is because excellent teaching is very well matched to pupils' abilities. Lively lessons enthuse and motivate them and often incorporate elements of PE or performing arts. For example, pupils used drama to play out their ideas before writing them down and they made notes about their football game so that they could write a match report later.

In lessons there is a very strong focus on the needs of individuals so that pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties progress well. Teachers have extremely high expectations of the pupils. Teaching assistants are used very well to enhance and support the learning of specific groups within lessons.

Assessment is very effective in identifying how well pupils have achieved and in giving them suitable advice on how to improve. Questioning is used extremely effectively to identify any misconceptions. Pupils know their targets well but do not have the opportunity to set their own targets.

The curriculum is enhanced with a rich variety of educational visits and visitors. The work done with schools in Cornwall and overseas is pivotal in enhancing pupils' understanding of different cultures. There is a rich variety of clubs, many sporting or artistic, which the majority of pupils attend and enjoy.

Pupils say they receive excellent care. They feel safe. There are very good induction procedures for pupils who arrive at the school and in preparation for their next stage of education. The school is well respected within the local community and the home school worker is pivotal in ensuring all parties have a clear understanding of what needs to happen for the pupils to make good progress.

### *These are the grades for the quality of provision*

The quality of teaching	1
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

## How effective are leadership and management?

The very strong senior leadership team sets very high expectations of all staff and gives a clear vision which is understood and shared. Staff respond well and ensure pupils are well cared for and make good progress. Such is the high quality of leadership that the school runs very well when senior staff are absent. Inclusion and equality are at the centre of the drive to raise standards and all pupils are very well catered for. Subject leadership is highly effective. The school has won a number of prestigious awards and it uses the process of gathering evidence well in order to

identify and remedy areas of weakness. For example, when going for the Artsmark award it identified that, although performing arts were very strong, fine art was not as well developed. The excellent displays around the school show that this is no longer the case. A measure of the strong support provided by the school for the staff is the good number of teaching assistants, who have either already or are about to train as teachers.

Parent are very complimentary of the support they receive from the school and also of the way in which the school ensures it gains an understanding of their concerns and views. The school also has excellent partnerships across a wide range of remits. These include support for pupils' welfare and also in developing curriculum areas and expertise. The school makes an excellent contribution to the local community and is seen by many as an integral part of their lives, especially through the high degree of usage outside of normal school times. This, along with the very strong cultural awareness across all areas of the curriculum, ensures community cohesion is excellent.

Governance is good; it holds the school to account and is very supportive. However some of its evaluations are not sufficiently rigorous in their analysis. The school provides outstanding value for money. It maintains systems which are as effective as possible to ensure pupils' safety.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are extremely supportive of the school. The returned questionnaires were positive. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'The school works excellently with both pupils and parents.' A number of parents noted that the school has been successful in supporting their children over a number of years.

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Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxdell Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent

has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 421 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84%	15%	1%	0%



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

5 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxdell Junior School, Luton, LU1 1UP



I visited your school recently with my colleague and met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at breaktime. We were very impressed with your friendliness and helpfulness and how proud you are of your school. We liked your new equipment in the playing field. We were impressed when you started afternoon school with an exercise and Tai Chi routine. We also noted that the smell from the surrounding area can be rather off putting. We agree with you and your teachers that you attend an excellent school. 'Fantastic Foxdell' is very true.

Your teachers and the other adults in school take excellent care of you. You enjoy a variety of very good lessons and an exciting curriculum. The work you do in PE and drama to help your writing is very impressive. You also go on a wide variety of visits and I noted how you enjoyed visiting the seaside in Southend-on-Sea and writing to your friends in Newquay. Standards in subjects have improved greatly over the last few years but we agree with your school that standards in English and particularly in writing are not high enough.

You have a very good understanding of what you need to do to become healthy and nearly all of you take part in a variety of sports. You must be congratulated on your excellent attendance and behaviour. This means your teachers can concentrate on teaching you well so that you make good progress. Your work is marked very well and you are told what you need to improve further but we feel you are not given sufficient responsibility to set your own targets.

You make an excellent contribution to the local community and you have a very good understanding of issues in other parts of Britain and the world.

The school is excellently led so that you feel very safe and well cared for. The views of you and your parents are taken into account well; for example, you were able to suggest the prayer room.

I wish you well in this excellent and supportive school. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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