

Foxhills Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116024
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326311
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Gadd 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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Douglas Wright
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Barrett
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 July 2006
School address	Foxhills Colbury Southampton SO40 7ED
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Age group	4–7
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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 12 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school strategic plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; the individual education plans of a proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; minutes of governors' meetings; reports from the School Improvement Partner; and just over 80 parental questionnaires.

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

- evidence that current attainment is above average and that learning and progress are good for all groups of pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, and whether pupils were clear on how to improve their work
- the extent to which teaching and assessment consistently meets the needs of all pupils
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, in ensuring that good steps are taken to improve the attainment of pupils and maintain good progress by using challenging targets
- whether the school had been effective in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection.

Information about the school

Foxhills Infant School is a slightly larger than average school. A growing number of pupils travel some distance to attend this school. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. A larger than average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These range from pupils with autism or physical difficulties to those requiring speech and language therapy; some have moderate learning needs. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in Reception. The school uses an external provider to provide breakfast club and after-school care.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Foxhills Infants School is a good school and has a number of strengths. 'This is a happy school with happy children.' This comment from a parent encapsulates the views expressed by the majority and concurs with inspection findings.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start in Reception.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and current Year 2 pupils have achieved above-average attainment. However, over time attainment is broadly average.
- From Reception onwards, pupils are polite and helpful. They are keen to participate in extra-curricular activities and most understand the importance of staying healthy.
- Governance is satisfactory and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Systematic methods for evaluating the school's effectiveness and communicating with parents now need to be developed.
- Teaching is good. The marking, verbal feedback in lessons and target setting in writing are very effective in helping pupils understand their next steps to learning. However, this good practice now needs to be developed in other subjects, along with assessment for learning.
- Attendance is broadly average.
- The curriculum is good and provides a meaningful context for learning.

Leadership and management have accurately identified areas for improvement and taken action to ensure improvement since the last inspection. All staff are committed to further improvements and set ambitious targets. However, monitoring activities have not always led to the rapid change needed to reach above-average attainment in all year groups.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has established excellent partnerships that help promote the learning and well-being of its pupils. Consequently, many vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. A wonderful example of this is the way in which autistic pupils receive focused and well-balanced support. As a result, they are able to interact with others and enjoy the experience of learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Further raise attainment for all pupils by:

- Ensuring that assessment for learning is fully embedded.
- Making sure that all marking consistently provides pupils with guidance to improve their work.
- Taking timely actions based on evidence gathered from monitoring activities.
- Ensuring that the governing body establishes systematic methods that enable them to evaluate the outcomes for pupils robustly and to communicate with parents more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The majority of parents feel that their children are safe in school. This sentiment was also supported by the pupils. As one child said, 'Of course we are safe – there are so many adults to help us and look after us!' Pupils know they can always ask for help and are clear about the 'Foxy Rules' on keeping safe and looking after each other. Behaviour is good and this contributes to the good learning that occurs in class. The current Year 2 pupils entered school with the expected skills for their age and unvalidated data indicate that their attainment is above average. However, current attainment in Year 1 is broadly average and attainment over time has also been broadly average. Evidence from pupils' books and classroom observations indicate that the vast majority of pupils are making at least good progress and pupils with specific learning needs often make outstanding progress according to their starting points and individual needs. This progress is a result of the effective support given to groups and individuals. Pupils are eager to learn and are engaged in their work.

Pupils are proud of their connection with the parent–teacher association (PTA). As one child stated, 'The PTA and school council try to improve things.' They particularly enjoy the class cameras and the new playground equipment provided by the PTA. Pupils appreciate the 'buddy system' at play-times and enjoy the responsibility of helping others.

Most pupils understand that it is important to stay healthy and participate in regular exercise. They talk about the importance of '5 a day' and enjoy their healthy snacks and dinner. As one child stated, 'Being healthy means that I can learn lots.'

The attainment reached by pupils in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), along with their desire to learn and cooperate with each other, prepares them well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	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	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?	2

How effective is the provision?

Since the last inspection, teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Teachers convey their high expectations for learning at the beginning and end of each lesson. Planning is clear and based on prior learning. Consequently, pupils learn well and progress is good for the majority of them and outstanding for others. In writing, pupils are involved in their own assessment for learning, and marking often provides pupils with advice on how to improve their work. This good practice is not yet consistently applied across other subjects. Resources are used well to help stimulate learning, including effective use of the interactive whiteboard.

The good curriculum is broad and well balanced. Curriculum planning is thorough and tailored to meet the needs of different groups of learners. Cross-curricular links are made where appropriate and topic work provides a meaningful, fun context in which to learn. This was evident during the inspection when children in Year 1 were learning to make bread as part of their topic on Victorians. Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning experiences and pupils enjoy attending the various clubs on offer, such as dancing, football, karate and film making.

The school is highly focused on ensuring that all children receive the care, guidance and support needed to allow at least good learning and progress. Over time, they have established extensive links with support agencies to ensure that vulnerable families are ably supported and that children receive the appropriate intervention within school. The school has appointed three of its own Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, who provide valuable support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Consequently, these pupils achieve well.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

'A lovely well managed school.' This view expressed by one parent echoes many. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work in partnership and, together with the senior management team, provide a clear direction for school improvement. They are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are well supported in achieving the challenging targets set for them. Since the last inspection, governors have established committees to consider resource and finance, and school improvement. The school is held to account through the discussions they have with subject leaders and by considering the data on pupils' progress. This now needs to develop further in order to ensure that attainment rises.

The school has a robust tracking system in place which identifies pupils' progress against targets set. On the whole, this is used to good effect and, as a result, provision has improved significantly in writing, reading and mathematics. However, evidence from monitoring activities last year was not always followed up and, as a result, attainment in the current Year 1 is broadly average. Since September, appropriate actions have taken place to address this issue and inspection evidence indicates that pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are now making good progress.

The school has managed to promote equality among different groups of learners and tackle any possible discrimination. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable to discrimination are identified early by the special needs coordinator and other leaders. Together, they have devised an effective programme of work and have highly skilled learning support staff. This support is particularly effective for children who have specific learning needs and those with autism.

Safeguarding procedures are fully in place. The school is currently in the process of fencing the playground from the car park.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has carried out an audit of needs and has clear aims in place. There is some evidence of impact but further work is needed to develop pupils' understanding of the diverse cultures that exist within the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

tackles discrimination	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

A growing number of children now enter Reception with skills below those expected for their age in calculating, reading and writing. Children make good progress, so that, by the time they leave Reception, their skills have developed very well.

Relationships with parents are strong and, as one parent wrote, 'My child's class teacher has made my little boy's first year at school a really positive experience.'

Clear assessment procedures are in place so that children can be tracked against the learning goals for their age. Adults use this information to help plan effectively for the next steps to learning. Transition arrangements are sound and help pupils settle into Year 1 well.

The Early Years Foundation leader provides strong leadership and has a clear view of the strengths and future areas for development. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has changed considerably since September and there is a greater emphasis on child-initiated play while a good balance with adult-directed learning is maintained. These changes need time to be fully embedded for their impact on outcomes for children to be seen.

There is a good balance between outdoor and indoor learning activities. Children enjoy learning and have a positive attitude towards one another. They work happily both independently and in groups, making choices where appropriate.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents were positive about the provision offered by the school. Several commented specifically on the good support their children received and on how happy their child was in school. Where inspectors agreed with the small number of concerns raised, they are addressed in the body of the report.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxhills Infant 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 84 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 192 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	74	10	0	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.



17 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxhills Infant School, Southampton, SO40 7ED

You may remember that two inspectors came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and everyone else who works in the school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. You made our visit very enjoyable.

Your school provides you with a good education.

These are the best things about your school:

- You make good progress in your work and reach broadly average standards.
- It is a very happy place, where you enjoy your lessons and get on well with each other.
- You feel safe and most of you understand how to stay healthy and enjoy taking exercise.
- Your topics are well planned and, because your teachers know what you need to learn next, you find learning fun and exciting.
- Your headteacher and all her staff make sure you get the best support possible to help you learn when you may be struggling with your work, or feeling sad or angry.

We have asked your school to improve three things to make your school even better. We have asked:

- your teachers to make sure you understand how to improve your own work
- your teachers to use their understanding of how well you are learning to make sure you reach high standards
- the governors to become more involved in how well you are learning and to have more regular contact with your parents.

You can help by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours faithfully

Susan Gadd
Her Majesty's Inspector

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