

Foley Infants School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124095
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328051
Inspection date	4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	162
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	Charles Lowe
Headteacher	Anne Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fairfield Drive Kinver Stourbridge DY7 6EW
Telephone number	01384 872382
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who investigated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following issues.

The reasons for standards in mathematics being relatively weaker than those in reading and writing.

The extent to which subject leaders are involved in promoting school improvement.

How effectively the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to support their learning.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, assessment and tracking records, parental questionnaire responses, observations of the school at work, and discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in the report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and has EYFS provision in two Reception classes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is privately managed before- and after-school provision on site.

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. It has some outstanding features and provides pupils with a very caring and stimulating environment in which to learn. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and rightly proud of the many exciting activities their children can experience. Two parental comments are typical of many: 'Foley provides a warm, caring environment where children learn effectively and feel valued' and 'A lovely school! My daughter will be sad to leave the friendly atmosphere and protection and security she enjoys.'

Good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher provides focused educational direction and is ably supported by senior leaders. All involved in the school share her vision for school improvement and a strong team ethos is evident. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables areas for development to be correctly identified and prioritised. Decisive action is then taken to bring about improvement. This is exemplified in the way that standards in reading and writing have improved recently, due to the introduction of a more systematic whole-school approach to teaching phonics. Similarly, when the need was identified, the role of subject leaders was targeted for improvement. Training was provided to raise the expertise of staff who are subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating provision. This has proved successful and subject leaders now play a full part in promoting school improvement. Governors support the school well and are effective in holding leaders to account for its performance. Community cohesion is promoted very well and ensures there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all, as part of the school and the local community. All in school are treated equally and fairly and helped to appreciate and value the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances.

Pupils make consistently good progress and reach standards at the end of Year 2 that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good achievement from their starting points on entering school. Though standards are above average in mathematics, they are relatively weaker than in reading and writing. This stems from there being insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part in practical problem-solving activities to practise and refine their mathematical skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well-targeted extra support they receive. The main reason for pupils' good progress is that teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, so that pupils of different abilities are effectively challenged. Marking is effective in guiding pupils to improve their work and they are also encouraged to think for themselves how they could do better. Relationships are excellent and lead to classrooms being calm and friendly places in which to learn. Pupils have positive attitudes, are keen to learn and show real engagement in their activities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They behave in an exemplary manner and are very kind and considerate to others. Pupils show a great deal of enjoyment in coming to school and this is typified in one pupil's comment, 'I just love this school.' They are adopting healthy lifestyles in an excellent fashion, showing a very good understanding of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They also show a very good awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. For example, pupils take on responsibilities such as being a member of the school council and the Early Years Enterprise Club, managing the Friendship Stop and distributing play equipment at break times. They happily take part in a wide range of local events and raise a significant amount of money for local charities. Pupils have a very good

understanding of the beliefs and traditions of people from cultures different from their own. This is supported by the strong links with an inner-city school in Wolverhampton that has a high proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Pupils are prepared well for when they start junior school.

The good curriculum is extended by an excellent range of enrichment activities. These include a very wide variety of extra-curricular activities, such as tennis, French, yoga, choir, gardening and knitting. Visits to places of educational interest and many opportunities to work with visiting specialists effectively extend pupils' experiences. Focus weeks, such as arts week and Foley fitness week, add extra interest to the curriculum and are enjoyed greatly by pupils. Extensive use is made of the local area to enhance many areas of the curriculum. Global links are being forged so that pupils can interact with pupils from Greece, Spain and a number of other European countries. The quality of the curriculum is reflected in the variety of national awards the school has gained, such as Artsmark, Healthy Schools Award and Activemark. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding and underpin pupils' excellent personal development. All staff are firmly committed to the safety and well-being of pupils and this aspect of the school's provision is much appreciated by parents. Child protection arrangements are rigorous and all staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Thorough risk assessments are in place for activities in and around school and for visits. The links with outside agencies are excellent and ensure very well-targeted extra support for individual pupils, when required.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision enables children to make good progress and achieve well. Children enter school with skill levels and abilities that are below those expected for their age. Good teaching and learning ensure they do well across all areas of learning and, by the time they enter Year 1, they attain average standards. Adults show a good understanding of the needs of children of this age and set activities that are challenging and linked effectively to children's own experiences. Children are encouraged to make choices for themselves and this makes a positive contribution to their development as independent learners. As a result, children are motivated to do well and are fully engaged in their learning. They behave in an excellent manner and show very good collaborative skills in pairs and small groups. The Early Years Enterprise Club enables children to make and sell items to the public and spend the funds on items of equipment of their own choice. This represents a very good introduction to the world of business. The quality of care is outstanding, with children's well-being being promoted in an excellent manner. Children feel very happy and safe, trusting the adults who look after them. Good leadership has accurately identified the need to improve the use of the outdoor area, which is currently satisfactory, in order to better support children's learning throughout the day. This is particularly the case in terms of providing large scale practical problem-solving activities in mathematics. Good links with parents mean they are kept fully informed of the progress their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to solve problems practically in mathematics.
- Use the outdoor area in the EYFS more effectively to promote children's learning.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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?	1
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?	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/or disabilities make progress	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 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?	1

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foley Infant School, Kinver, DY7 6EW

Thank you for the really friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the exciting things you do. Your school is good in many ways and some things about it are outstanding. It helps you make good progress and reach standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.

What we found out about your school.

- It is a very friendly place in which to work and play.
- You show a lot of enjoyment in coming to school and are very keen to learn.
- There is a very wide range of after-school clubs in which you can take part.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you work really well with each other in pairs and small groups.
- You contribute a great deal to the life of the school and the local community.
- Adults look after you very well and make sure you are safe in and around school and on visits.
- You are leading healthy lifestyles and show a very good awareness of how to stay safe.
- Children in Reception enjoy trying things out for themselves.
- You are well prepared for when you start junior school.
- Leaders of the school are working hard to make further improvements and help you do even better.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Help you do even better in mathematics by giving you more opportunities to solve problems practically.
- Improve the use of the outdoor area for children in Reception to better support their learning.

You can help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in all you do. All of you are a credit to your school.

Yours faithfully

Melvyn Hemmings Lead inspector