

Foster's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101451
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	335720
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Chadwick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Haddock
Headteacher	Bruce Fletcher
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. 17 lessons were observed and 12 teachers were seen. Inspectors also held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and representatives of the governing body. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, inspectors examined 73 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress through Nursery and Reception and standards at the end of Reception
- pupils' current attainment in key stages 1 and 2 and the evenness of their learning and progress through the school in reading, writing and mathematics
- the extent to which teaching and assessment consistently meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels check the quality of the school's work and their impact on raising achievement.

Information about the school

This above average-sized primary school, with a nursery, serves the local community and its surrounding area. There is a lower-than-average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are from Asian or Black heritages and are also at the early stages of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities is below average, although the number with statements of educational needs is average. These pupils' difficulties are mainly related to speech, literacy, autism, emotional and behavioural issues. The school has gained a Healthy School Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school where pupils' personal development is good. The headteacher, well supported by his senior team, has established a positive learning ethos based on excellent relationships, shared values and mutual respect. Pupils learn in an attractive and well-organised environment where they are well cared for and kept very safe. These factors, together with an interesting curriculum, lead to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, good behaviour, and enjoyment of school. Recently senior leaders have successfully and correctly focused most of their attention on the attainment of the older pupils.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make an excellent start in the Nursery while progress in Reception and Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in both Reception and Key Stage 1 few reach higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics and more-capable pupils do relatively less well than others. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2, although due to particularly good teaching in mathematics they make good progress in this subject. Pupils' writing shows signs of improving, although spelling and punctuation are relatively weaker aspects and pupils do not always use imaginative vocabulary well enough.

Teachers are enthusiastic, manage their pupils well and provide interesting learning contexts. In Reception and Key Stage 1 there is not always enough direct teaching of basic literacy skills. During group writing, links with reading are not always strong and do not build enough on pupils' reading and phonics skills. Pupils have strong opportunities for taking part in after-school activities and for developing their information, communication and technology skills. They make good contributions to the community and develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles well.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Satisfactory self-evaluation procedures have been strengthened by senior leaders, particularly assessment systems and checks on pupils' progress. The evaluation of pupils' performance is mainly accurate and most of the school's weaknesses have been correctly identified. Subject leaders provide support for their colleagues, but the school acknowledges the need to deploy them more in observing lessons and in evaluating pupils' assessments across the school. The dedicated governing body is currently and correctly strengthening its ability to evaluate pupils' attainment and progress. All this, along with evident improvement in some key areas such as Key Stage 2, points to a school with a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Reception and Key Stage 1 by:
 - increasing the proportions reaching higher levels of attainment
 - using more direct teaching during literacy lessons in Reception and Key Stage 1 and ensuring that writing tasks build securely upon pupils' reading skills.
- Improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and ability to use more exciting words when writing in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the proportion of good and better learning by:
 - allowing pupils have more time to apply the skills they have been taught
 - using assessment effectively, ensuring there is consistent challenge for more-capable pupils
 - staff intervening more consistently during play in Reception in order to promote children's good learning.
- Ensure all those with leadership responsibilities, including governors, actively monitor the quality of provision and use outcomes to bring about improvement in pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring the school improvement plan places due emphasis on reading
 - developing the role of middle leaders
 - strengthening governors' ability to evaluate data and providing greater levels of challenge.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning. Classrooms are calm, pupils feel safe and there are excellent relationships between adults and pupils. The fall in attainment in English, mathematics and science over the last few years has been arrested in Key Stage 2 particularly in mathematics. Teachers' improved teaching skills were demonstrated in a good lesson observed in Year 6. Pupils solved problems using ratios and proportions and the teacher used real life situations to help pupils understand these mathematical terms and see the everyday relevance of this aspect of mathematics. Good use of assessment ensured work was well matched to pupils' differing abilities at all stages and pupils applied their mental arithmetical skills well to their problems. However, while satisfactory, there is not yet enough of this consistently high-quality learning across the whole school, and in particular in Reception and Key Stage 1, to ensure all pupils make the best possible progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because their needs are carefully identified and they are given sound support.

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Those who speak little or no English settle quickly and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are supported well and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare.

Pupils develop a pride in their school and themselves and are very polite and well mannered. They make a valuable contribution to the school and wider community through their school council work and the way they support charities. Reflecting the school's Healthy School award, pupils are very keen advocates of healthy lifestyles and enjoy sport. Pupils' average attendance and the extent to which they apply their basic skills prepare them soundly for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' enthusiasm and good management of pupils are a common strength. Plans often show clearly what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn and teachers make sure that pupils know what they are learning. As a result, pupils can usually say what they need to do to reach their targets. The broad curriculum focuses on the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and

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

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includes a wide array of creative, practical activities which enliven the curriculum. In science there is now a better balance between investigative work and the coverage of scientific knowledge. Cross-curricular links help to develop pupils' independent enquiry skills. A very wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, including visits and visitors, sports and music tuition all enhance pupils' learning opportunities. Nevertheless, despite these many positives, teaching is variable across the school. It is more effective in the Nursery and Key Stage 2 than in Reception and Key Stage 1. Not all teachers make the best use of learning time, such as in overlong lesson introductions. In Reception and Key Stage 1 there is not always enough direct teaching of basic skills or links between reading and writing. In addition, teachers do not always make the best use of their assessments of pupils' reading skills when planning literacy tasks.

Partnerships with other schools enrich pupils' learning. Pupils are well looked after and there are well-managed systems for child protection and health and safety across the school. Good induction arrangements help to ease the transition from one stage of education to the next. Adults provide strong support for pupils' social and emotional development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have created a very friendly school where parents, teachers, pupils, parents and governors work in partnership. Senior leaders communicate their vision for improving pupils' achievement clearly to staff. There is more robust tracking information so the progress of classes and groups of pupils is better assessed. They have introduced national assessment materials to moderate pupils' work and a common approach to planning lessons. This has enabled leaders to successfully address some underachievement, to make improvements in teaching and to interpret National Curriculum levels more accurately. Governors are well organised and newly appointed governors are receiving training so they are better able to challenge the school in matters of attainment and progress. The school recognises there is still more to do as underachievement for some younger, more-capable pupils has not been fully addressed. This is partly due to the lack of involvement of subject leaders in analysing performance data and monitoring lessons, which prevents them having a full impact on eliminating inconsistencies. Added to this, the lack of more precise information for reading in the school improvement plan somewhat limits work on the most important areas of

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development.

Systems for safeguarding and risk assessment are good and receive the right priority. The school is vigilant in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. It makes a good impact on promoting community cohesion locally. Global links are well established, but the school has rightly evaluated that further work is needed to reach out to the wider British community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age. Children's progress and the teaching they receive is excellent in the Nursery and satisfactory in Reception. By the end of Reception standards are broadly average. In both Nursery and Reception children settle happily due to strong induction procedures and children's welfare and safety are well promoted.

There is a strong emphasis on developing children's personal and speaking skills and teachers provide a balance between enabling children to learn through focused adult-led sessions and play. In the Nursery teachers create exciting real life contexts to help children learn, for example, when creating a 'Space Ship' after reading an exciting story together. Role play areas provide excellent scope for children to develop their communication skills, knowledge and creativity and staff intervene very effectively at such times to stimulate children's thinking. Consequently, children make an excellent start in early reading and numeracy. In Reception role play and other play activities do not always extend this learning as adults do not consistently intervene to encourage

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children to develop their skills. In addition, there is not always enough direct teaching or use of assessment during literacy sessions for matching reading and writing tasks to children's learning needs.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. A uniform assessment system has recently been put in place to help staff evaluate the impact of provision on the progress of individuals and the whole group more easily. This is helping to iron out the inconsistencies between the Nursery and Reception classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Fewer than one third of the parents responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority of those who did were positive about the school and what it does for their children. They feel this is a happy school where their children are kept very safe and their children enjoy school. While the majority of parents are pleased with the progress their children are making, a minority felt this was inconsistent for more-capable pupils. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and also find that progress for more-capable pupils is inconsistent.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foster's Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team inspector received 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	68	22	30	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	71	21	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	48	33	45	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	41	47	39	53	3	4	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	47	36	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	45	4	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	41	4	58	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	37	37	51	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	38	40	55	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	41	38	52	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	41	37	51	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	59	30	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	60	28	38	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foster's Primary School, Welling, DA16 1PN

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. You are a credit to yourselves and the school ☐ well done! This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education and here are some of the things your school does well.

- You make excellent progress in the Nursery.
- Your attainment is above average in mathematics by the time you leave.
- You enjoy school and help to make your school a special place because you behave well and are very helpful.
- You understand how important it is to keep fit and healthy and enjoy sport.
- You have good opportunities for using computers and for developing your skills in ICT.
- You have many interesting learning opportunities, including visits, visitors and clubs.
- Staff take very good care of you and keep you safe.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve:

- help some of you to reach higher standards in Reception and Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics
- help those of you in Key Stage 2 to improve your spelling, punctuation and ability to use more exciting words when you write
- make all lessons as good as the best ones so that the work is just at the right level and never too easy or hard for you
- ensure school leaders, teachers in charge of subjects and governors keep a closer check on how well you are doing.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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