

Foxwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101493
Local Authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	335731
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Mick Megee

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	15
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mrs Joanna Holt
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried by one additional inspector. The inspector observed almost five hours of lessons involving all five teachers, and held discussions with the chair of the management committee, the lead teacher of the 'Self-Management Group', the owner of the local outdoor pursuits centre, the school counsellor, two parents of pupils, members of staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including the records for individual pupils, development plans, data for tracking pupils' progress, reports of, and to, the management committee, curriculum and teaching plans, health and safety and safeguarding documents, attendance, punctuality and behaviour monitoring documentation, and incident and accident logs. The inspector also read five questionnaires received from parents, 11 pupil and seven staff questionnaires.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- how well pupils overcome the obstacles that they face to their learning to achieve in the different core subjects
- how well the support and guidance that staff give helps pupils to return to mainstream education
- how effectively the school's promotion of community cohesion helps pupils to develop their awareness of other cultures and faiths.

Information about the school

Foxwood School provides education for pupils who have behavioural and/or emotional difficulties and who have been permanently excluded from at least one mainstream secondary school. The school also provides short-stay programmes for pupils within mainstream schools who are at risk of being excluded. The headteacher has recently returned from a lengthy absence during which time the school was led by a temporary headteacher.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Foxwood School provides its pupils with a good education, and gives them a solid platform of educational and personal achievement from which they can resume their education and have a successful future. One typical comment from parents was 'I wish all schools offered the same facilities as Foxwood. It's been a godsend.'

Pupils join Foxwood with a poor and fragmented experience of schooling, and this means that their attainment is below average. Good skilful teaching, coupled with effective care, support and guidance, helps the pupils to gain insight into their difficulties and quickly recover their self-confidence. Their attendance and attitude to learning improve, often quite dramatically. Pupils' behaviour and relationships with each other and the staff are excellent. One pupil spoke for others when she said, 'In my old school I was always getting jumped on if I spoke. Here we get listened to when we say things. You feel they really care.' Feeling welcomed every day, pupils make good progress in their academic work, and their achievement is good. Progress in science is held back by limitations in the accommodation, although there are advanced plans in place to build an extra room for this.

The school offers the pupils a satisfactory curriculum, although one or two pupils, particularly those who have attended the school for longer than two terms, do not have a completely full and broad timetable. The programme for extending pupils' awareness of living in a multi-cultural society is satisfactory but not fully developed. Leadership and management are good and have brought about good personal and academic outcomes for the pupils. The school and the management committee have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and articulate a clear vision of what needs to be done next. In partnership with other schools, the school has introduced very effective arrangements that have significantly reduced the number of exclusions within the borough. Developments such as these, together with the school's successful track record since the last inspection and its accurate self-evaluation, demonstrate clearly the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - all pupils are offered sufficient teaching hours in order to maximise their learning
 - those pupils who stay at the school for longer than two terms have a sufficiently broad range of subjects to widen their opportunities for

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achievement.

- Ensure that pupils develop their awareness of other cultures and faiths through a planned programme of activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Once at the school, pupils quickly develop very good attitudes to learning, and they made good progress in the lessons observed in this inspection. Pupils make good progress against their individual academic and personal targets. This means that they quickly develop a good range of basic skills in teamwork, literacy and numeracy that stand them in good stead for their future return to mainstream schools or colleges. Achievement in English and mathematics is good. Achievement in science is satisfactory but held back because there is a shortage of space to undertake practical laboratory work. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. There is no bullying or swearing (staff have zero tolerance on this) and pupils are helpful and sensitive to each other and the staff. In a meeting with pupils, when asked what they would change, one pupil said, 'Just a little thing. Sometimes I have to remind my teacher to email me my homework.' Pupils clearly enjoy coming in to school, where they feel safe and valued, and speak fondly of the adults, recognising that staff care for them as individuals and have their best interests at heart. Girls achieve as well as boys, and there is no discernible difference in the achievement of any other groups in the school.

Most pupils attend the school for only a short stint, and opportunities for them to contribute to the school and local community are satisfactory but not fully developed. For example, the school does not have a pupil council by which pupils could make their views known as a group. Pupils have a good understanding of how to make healthy choices, but too many pupils smoke, even though the school itself runs a strict no-smoking policy. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although cultural awareness is not as strongly developed as other aspects. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their feelings each day at the community meeting and in the regular individual sessions they have with teachers and the school counsellor. Attendance improves dramatically for most pupils, although one or two attend inconsistently, and this limits what those pupils are able to achieve.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Staff at the school have a good understanding and knowledge of the pupils' history and family circumstances. Lessons are characterised by very positive relationships within the classrooms and good teamwork. There is a strong consistency of approach across all staff that creates clear boundaries for the pupils. Pupils welcome this and say, 'They are really strict here. But that shows they care, and it stops you getting distracted.' The 'Green Book' reward system ensures that pupils evaluate their own academic performance and behaviour at the end of each lesson and receive feedback from the staff. Pupils find it fair, easy to understand and motivating. The school counsellor provides much welcomed counselling and one-to-one support for pupils and parents. In lessons, there is effective use of new technology, particularly interactive whiteboards that help pupils who have a predominantly visual style of learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, recognised by the pupils who said, 'The science teacher knows such a lot, he can give you the answer to any question. He should be on the telly. He even grows basil in pots at home.' Most teachers are good at customising the activities to match individual needs and capabilities on the basis of the good assessment for learning that takes place. However, one or two teachers are not so skilful, and work may sometimes be too easy for higher attaining pupils. The curriculum has a good focus on the essential personal and academic skills that will enable pupils to re-engage smoothly with mainstream learning either at school or college. The school goes out of its way to enrich this basic diet with some exciting activities, such as attending a local outdoor pursuits centre, where pupils undertake teambuilding activities and overcome their fears on the climbing towers and high ropes course. However, teaching time is sometimes too

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short, and there are one or two pupils who have remained at the school for a longer period than others and they do not receive a sufficiently broad range of subjects.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher form an effective leadership team, alongside the management committee, that promotes ambition and innovation well. They provide clear direction for school improvement and monitor the quality of its provision well. The school has an accurate view of its work and understands where its areas for development lie. Staff engage with parents and carers very well. The school is regarded highly by its partners and by the local authority, notably through its success in helping to prevent exclusion. The school maintains positive, regular contact with local colleges through the college link worker. There are strong partnerships too with mainstream schools, particularly for pupils who are on the three-week 'Self-Management' programme. There is good liaison with a wide range of agencies, such as social services and Connexions, to support its pupils and their families. The management committee carries out its role effectively and provides the school with good support and challenge. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, having undertaken an audit of the community the school serves and produced the required plan. Implementation is at an early stage and, aside from the short-stay programme, there is only limited evidence of the school's success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. The school meets all statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding and there is a determination that the pupils enjoy an education that is varied and exciting within a well-managed and secure environment. The school places a clear emphasis on respect, rights and responsibilities and makes a good contribution to the promotion of equality and tackling discrimination.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The inspector received five parental questionnaires. The parents and carers who responded are overwhelmingly appreciative of the work that the school undertakes to support their children. 'They have done so much to help and support my son' is typical of the comments written. One or two parents said that they felt that the pupils sometimes receive too few teaching hours. Inspectors agree with this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxwood 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.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	3	60	2	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	4	80	1	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	1	20	4	80	0	0	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)	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	20	4	80	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	2	40	3	60	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	1	20	4	80	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



25 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxwood School, Wokingham RG40 1DD

You may remember that I came to visit your school recently to report on how well you are doing. Thank you for making my visit so enjoyable and for making me feel very welcome. I really enjoyed seeing you work so well with each other, and hats off to all of you who climbed up on the high ropes at the outdoor pursuits centre!

You were very positive about the school, both in our meeting and in the survey. On the basis of this inspection, I can see why. The inspection showed that the school provides you with a good education. These are some of the other things I found out.

- You are quickly getting back on track with your work and your progress is good, because of the good teaching and the individual tuition.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are developing much more self-control.
- You enjoy being at the school and you get on very well with the staff who do a good job of giving you advice, support and encouragement when you need it.
- Those in charge of the school make sure that it runs smoothly and know what needs to be improved.

I would like the school to improve a few things. I have asked them to do the following.

- Make sure that you all have a full timetable, and learn all the subjects you need to be successful.
- Help you to become more aware of what it is to live in a multi-cultural society.

You could play your part by carrying on working as hard as you can to give yourselves every chance of a very successful life and career. Those of you who smoke might like to consider giving up or at least cutting down.

All the very best for the future,

Yours sincerely

Mick Megee

Lead Inspector

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