

# Foxfield School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105131
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	336429
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Smith

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	123
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	45
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Keith Martingell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Baird
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	Douglas Drive Moreton Wirral CH46 6BT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 6778555
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 6785480
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@foxfield.wirral.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	336429

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at lesson planning and student progress data. They also considered 42 questionnaires from parents, 58 from students and 51 from staff.

- the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including links with other agencies
- the effectiveness of the collection, evaluation and use of data in providing challenge in students' learning and the promotion of good progress
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in the drive for continual improvement
- the sixth-form provision and outcomes, including the planning and approach to the promotion of community cohesion.

## Information about the school

Foxfield is a secondary school for students who have complex needs including severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties. Many students have additional needs including autistic spectrum disorder, sensory impairment, physical disabilities and challenging behaviour. All students have a statement of special educational needs. The vast majority of students are of White British background and boys outnumber girls by two to one. Eleven of the students are looked after by the local authority. In January 2009, the headteacher returned to the school following a two year secondment to the local authority. The school has a number of awards including the Healthy Schools 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

Foxfield is a satisfactory school which meets the students' personal needs well. Care, guidance and support are good and the enrichment of the curriculum is a particular strength. Following his return to the school, the headteacher has initiated a period of rapid change. Many of the current developments are new and have not yet had time to make a significant difference. For example, the role of middle leaders is developing and many have new responsibilities. They share the ambition for improvement and have the skills and determination to help lead change. However, their role is not developed fully in order to bring about significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, although senior leaders recognise the need to ensure that self-evaluation is based more firmly on the available evidence. The governing body provides good support and increasing levels of challenge to senior leaders. Consequently, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Students' attitude to learning is good and they make every effort to attend school. When the extent of their learning difficulties and other barriers to learning are taken into account, their achievement is satisfactory. The tracking system used to monitor students' progress indicates in-school variation in progress across different groups. Some of this is linked to the students' learning needs but other aspects are not analysed in sufficient depth in order to target intervention to boost student progress. In general, boys make less progress than girls and this is partly because too few opportunities are provided to engage them in practical learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and includes some exciting new developments. There are good links with local schools to provide opportunities for students to learn alongside their mainstream peers. Students appreciate the rich and varied range of additional activities and communicate enthusiastically about their residential trips. The staff team make best use of the available accommodation and work continues to improve access to the classrooms. Attractive displays celebrate the students' hard work in subjects such as art and design. The school works well with other agencies to provide good care, guidance and support.

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Work-related learning is a particular strength which helps to boost the students' preparation for the next stage of their education. The promotion of independent travel is a success and, as one parent commented, 'This gave my daughter the confidence to experience new things.'

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

- Improve student achievement by ensuring that the collection and evaluation of data

**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

on student progress is used more effectively to challenge students to do their best.

- Increase the capacity for practical opportunities, including the use of new technologies, to increase the progress made by boys.
- Develop the contribution of middle leaders to increase the percentage of good and better teaching and learning.
- 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**

Students make satisfactory progress in their work from their various starting points. However, the data from the last two years highlights in-school variation in the students' progress. Senior leaders have started to improve the reliability of assessment and are analysing the data to help plan better support and intervention in the future. At Key Stage 3, girls make good progress and boys only satisfactory progress in English. Progress is stronger in listening and writing than in reading. The school has recognised the need to buy new reading resources to help boost progress. Looked after children make similar progress to their peers at this key stage.

Progress slows down a little at Key Stage 4. This is being addressed by changes to the courses studied. As a result, students' progress, as observed in lessons during the inspection, is now improving. Students make satisfactory progress in English at Key Stage 4. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Girls make stronger progress in mathematics than boys because they are more effectively motivated by the learning materials. Students that are eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers. Least progress was made in science across the school but this has now improved to satisfactory. This is because of a stronger focus on monitoring students' progress by the subject leader. Students make more progress in the practical aspects of science and those students with profound and multiple learning difficulties respond well to these practical activities. Consequently, their progress is closer to their peers in science than in the other subjects.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is enhanced by interesting cultural events and achievement assemblies. Reflecting the school's Healthy Schools Award and Sportsmark, students demonstrate that they understand how to lead healthy lifestyles. Members of the school council are confident that their views make a real difference to school improvement. They visited other schools in order to help make suggestions for the menu at Foxfield. The extension of the curriculum, including residential visits, makes a major contribution to the students' personal development. Students clearly feel safe in the school, develop positive friendships and attend well. Due to the complexity of some of the students' needs, their behaviour does pose an ongoing challenge to staff. However, staff and parents commented on the progress made by many of the students in taking increased responsibility for their own actions.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**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

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Lessons are usually enjoyable and students generally display good attitudes to learning. Typically, a student commented that, 'I enjoy the lessons; my favourites are swimming and information and communication technology.' The teaching assistants provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Relationships are strong, which gives students the confidence to work independently yet request assistance when needed. They enjoy working in groups and celebrate each other's achievements. The system for planning lessons is thorough but is not yet used consistently across the school. Consequently, there is too little reference in the planning to the expectations of students' learning. This leads to satisfactory, rather than good, levels of challenge in their work.

The recent changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum are not established fully. However, the changes provide students with more flexible and interesting learning opportunities. The development of students' communication skills has improved since the last inspection and this has extended their access to learning. Students enjoy using information and communication technology but some opportunities are lost to use this resource, for example, to manage data in science. Boys, in particular, respond well to practical learning. There are plans to extend the available accreditation at Key Stage 4 to challenge the higher ability students more effectively. Enterprise activities are popular

<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.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

**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

and provide students with active learning experiences that prepare them for their time in the sixth form. The provision of activities during the lunch break and after school is very good. This includes the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and sailing activities with mainstream students. All students have the opportunity to take part in residential trips which is a major boost to their personal development.

The staff team know the students very well and work hard to provide effectively for the needs of students who are more vulnerable or find it difficult to behave well. There is a high regard for health and safety in all of the activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher provides clear and confident leadership. Senior leaders have identified appropriate areas for improvement and are working hard to drive forward rapid improvement. This includes extending the roles of middle leaders to ensure that they help to develop a greater sense of urgency for improving teaching and learning. Whilst the school has sound links with its local community, the process for planning and evaluating the school's impact on community cohesion is underdeveloped. The school provides high levels of professional development for the staff to prepare them for meeting the students' complex range of needs. The school works with a wide range of partners to guide and support students effectively. The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development and provides a satisfactory level of challenge to senior leaders. Members of the governing body spend time in the school and give up their time to accompany the students on some of the educational visits. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. There is a strong and effective focus on the promotion of equal opportunity. Resources are used appropriately to provide satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

There is a successful focus on developing the students' independence skills in the sixth form. Since the last inspection this has included the introduction of more challenging courses. These provide good opportunities for students to make good progress and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Students thoroughly enjoy their work placements which help to develop their confidence. Some of the students travel to work and school on their own, which is a great step forward and part of the good care, guidance and support programme. Parents appreciate the opportunities provided to develop their child's social skills. Teaching and learning are good and at times outstanding. Enthusiastic and very well planned teaching captivates students and they make excellent progress in some lessons. This encourages students to develop a 'have a go' approach to their work. Learning is made age appropriate and relevant to students' everyday life. Students take great pride in their work and their folders are a credit to them. The staff team work with great skill and determination to sustain the interest of those students who have very challenging behaviour. Good leadership continues to move the curriculum and accreditation forward. There is insufficient planning to promote community cohesion which limits the opportunity for the school to evaluate their impact on the local area.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. All of



**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

the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience in the school. A few parents have some doubts about the progress being made by their child. However, the strong parent and carer satisfaction is reflected in a few of the comments made: 'We are so lucky to have our child at Foxfield.'; 'My child loves school.' and 'My son's behaviour has calmed down a lot.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxfield 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 received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 123 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	55	15	39	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	71	11	29	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	55	16	42	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	58	15	39	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)	21	55	12	32	1	3	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	71	9	24	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	55	15	39	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	58	14	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	76	9	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	71	10	26	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Foxfield School, Wirral CH46 6BT

Thank you for making me and my colleagues so welcome. We enjoyed our visit and the opportunity to see how well you are doing. I am writing this letter to tell you what we found out.

Foxfield is a satisfactory school and the sixth form is good. You all seem to enjoy school and your attendance is good. You are cared for well and good arrangements are made to keep you safe. The members of staff are effective at helping you to improve your behaviour. You have helped the school to get a number of awards, linked, for example, to physical education and art – well done! You should be proud of the displays of your work in the classes and around the school. The activities provided for you, particularly your residential visits, are very exciting.

The headteacher and the staff work hard to help you. We think that it is important that you make as much progress as possible and have asked your teachers to plan your work carefully to ensure that it is neither too easy nor too hard. Also we have asked for even more opportunities to be provided for you to learn by taking part in practical activities. We think that it is important for more of the staff to visit you in class to see how well you are learning.

We hope that you will all try your best and wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr David Smith

Lead Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**