

Foxdell Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109572
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	337320
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Norma Ball

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tafeen Sharif
Headteacher	Carolyn Doherty
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and observed 11 teachers. The inspectors met parents, informally, on the first morning of the inspection and held meetings with the headteacher, teaching staff, governors and pupils. The school's work was observed: this included scrutinising samples of pupils' work, the school's systems for tracking pupils' progress, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and safeguarding documentation. In addition, inspectors took account of questionnaire responses from 66 parents and carers and 22 staff.

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

- the effectiveness of teaching in improving progress and raising attainment for all groups of pupils, especially for boys in literacy and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who speak English as an additional language
- how well assessment information is used to plan lessons to ensure all groups of pupils are appropriately challenged and are guided to help improve their work
- how successful the steps taken to reverse the downward trend in levels of attendance have been
- the rigour with which leaders and managers at all levels monitor the work of the school, promote improved achievement and drive the school forward following the expansion in size and changing profile of pupils admitted to the school.

Information about the school

Foxdell is larger than similar schools and expanded to three-form entry in September 2008. A larger than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi and a large proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is similar to the national picture.

In 2007 the school was extended to provide three additional classrooms and an extended outdoor learning area for Reception classes. A Children's Centre was built on the school site in 2008. The Foxcubs Nursery in the Children's Centre is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection. The school has gained the Activemark award and holds Healthy Schools status.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to this good school because they are well taught and lessons are interesting. Pupils behave well in lessons and playtimes are happy and harmonious. The admission of new pupils in 2008, some with learning and emotional needs or little previous school experience, led to a temporary dip in standards in 2009 which has now been addressed and standards are again improving. Children make a good start to their learning in Reception, and by the end of Year 2 reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Parents are pleased with all that the school provides. One said, 'My child has made good progress this year. His spellings are good and so is his maths. He really likes school and working in class.'

Pupils show enjoyment in learning as a result of the good curriculum, which focuses on a creative approach to making learning fun. The progress made by boys in literacy is improving. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress from their individual starting points because good support is provided for them. Pupils' progress is tracked well through the school. However, in some classes teachers do not use what they know about how well pupils are doing consistently enough to plan tasks that fully challenge them, especially the most able. Pupils' work is marked carefully but does not always make clear how a piece of work can be improved. Attendance has improved as a result of careful monitoring, but a few families still do not assign a high priority to regular attendance. The school meets safeguarding requirements well and good care, guidance and support are provided for all pupils and their families. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They make a good contribution to their school and local community and show pride and enthusiasm in the responsibilities they carry out, such as play leaders and school councillors.

The strong leadership of the headteacher, who works in a close partnership with the senior team, ensures that new developments are carefully planned and closely monitored. All staff share her ambition to improve standards further and provide a stimulating learning experience for pupils. Members of the governing body offer good challenge to the school as well as strong support. Leaders and managers at all levels are ambitious to bring further improvements to the school and there is good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by building on existing good practice to ensure that:
 - assessment information is used consistently to plan challenging tasks for pupils

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of different ability levels, especially the most able

- marking helps pupils to understand clearly how to improve their work in literacy and numeracy.
- Improve attendance by continuing to work closely with parents and carers to reduce unnecessary absences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In most lessons observed, pupils were seen to make good progress. The result of teacher assessments for 2010 show the decline in standards in 2009 has been addressed. Standards remain average but are once again on track and improving. Reading has been slow to improve and the school is increasing the support provided through their volunteer reading partner scheme to create more reading opportunities for all pupils. In 2009, the school admitted additional pupils to fill the vacant places arising from an extra form of entry. There has also been a steady increase in the number of pupils from different ethnic communities, many speaking English as an additional language. Families come from 17 different countries and speak 20 languages. The school has responded promptly to the challenges posed by a changing pupil profile. As a result of good induction arrangements and the development of individual and effective learning support for all pupils, especially those who are at an early stage of speaking English and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, virtually all groups of pupils make good progress in their time in school.

The emphasis on a creative curriculum, with selection of themes and topics which reflect pupils' interests, has been successful, especially in inspiring boys in literacy. As a result, writing has improved for both boys and girls and they are also developing their skills in problem solving and mental mathematics. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils were enthusiastically involved in discussing three wishes and then settled quickly to their writing task because they were eager to record their own wishes in a letter. Boys and girls participated well and were especially keen to use powerful and exciting words. Pupils try to do their best in lessons because learning is fun, relationships with adults are good and they are well supported. One pupil, representative of many others, said, 'My school is special because the teachers are really kind and give us interesting work to do.'

Pupils' personal development is promoted well. They respect the many cultures within their school and local area, show kindness to each other and respect to adults. Pupils are very clear about the importance of exercise and eating healthy foods and this is reflected in the Healthy Schools status. Pupils show interest and respect for the environment and the special eco warriors take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils enjoy finding out about other faiths and ways of life and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' good achievement, enjoyment of learning and the good personal skills they develop, ensure they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good but there are some inconsistencies between classes. Teachers mostly have good subject knowledge and use information and communication technology (ICT) well to provide lively learning experiences. Lessons are planned with a clear structure and the purpose of the lesson is explained well to pupils. Reviews at the end of lessons often encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of their peers. Classroom assistants are well deployed and work in close and effective partnership with teachers. They provide good support for pupils who do not find learning easy, are developing their English language skills or need help to catch up with missed work. Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully, but where teaching is less strong they do not use this information effectively to plan sharply tasks which stretch pupils fully, especially those who find learning easier. Marking reflects the learning objectives and targets set for pupils well, but does not always identify the next steps in learning and how a piece of work can be improved to enable pupils to make even better progress.

The curriculum has been successfully adapted to provide interesting learning experiences for all pupils and particularly to capture the imagination of boys. Themes

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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relating to castles, dragons and pirates have been very popular with pupils and have inspired writing in all year groups. Links are gradually developing across subjects to add fun to learning, for example laptops are used in literacy and numeracy lessons to extend ICT skills. Good displays, which celebrate pupils' writing and art work, enhance the learning environment, which is colourful and stimulating. Visits out of school and visitors to school are well selected to extend themes as well as to provide a range of important first-hand learning experiences for pupils. During the inspection, all classes met the forensic scientists and, using skeletons, discovered how they could find forensic clues to solve crimes. Pupils spoke animatedly of their trip to the Tower of London, which was a 'real life' castle for them to explore. After school clubs also bring learning alive outside of the classroom and the cookery club is especially popular. The good support and care provided by the school is extended by good links with a range of agencies and services. The role of family workers is especially valuable in linking the school and home and they have been helpful in the drive to improve attendance as well as in supporting new pupils from ethnic groups to integrate quickly into school. Further work with parents remains to be done to eliminate the remaining unauthorised absences. Lunch times are happy and sociable and especially enhanced by enthusiastic play leaders and lunch time staff, who initiate games and help strengthen pupils' social skills.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is good. Strategic planning identifies incisively areas for improvement and, through the 'leading learning cycle', developments are carefully integrated and monitored for effectiveness. The successful introduction of efficient tracking of the progress made by pupils, and the introduction of a range of well-chosen learning strategies in literacy and numeracy, have led to clear improvements in achievement. The school is an inclusive community and promotes equality well. There has been a successful focus on improving the attainment of boys, pupils from minority ethnic groups, and also pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and their progress has also improved. Subject leaders monitor their areas of responsibility well and are making an increased contribution to development planning and school self-evaluation.

The governing body has a good range of skills which are used to advantage. It offers both good support and effective challenge to senior staff, for example, in initiating an

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investigation into the underachievement of boys. The partnership with parents and carers is good, with very detailed termly meetings arranged to discuss pupils' progress. Pupils are very well involved in their local area and the school is at the heart of its community. However, the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory because pupils have few opportunities to become aware of the rich diversity of cultures and beliefs of the United Kingdom. Safeguarding arrangements are well planned with efficient procedures and clear policies.

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
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the stimulating learning environment created for them in Reception classes. Resources are good and used well to promote good learning opportunities for all children so they make good progress. Children mix well and learn to share. All staff provide a high level of care so children blossom as individuals. Learning flows well between the indoor and outdoor learning areas and there is a good balance of adult-led and children's own independently initiated learning experiences. Staff are skilled at extending children's learning and they gently challenge them in their games and role play activities to promote the development of their skills. Children's progress is regularly and carefully assessed. The good flow of information between school and home ensures that parents and carers are kept well informed about the development of their child and also receive helpful information on the week's activities.

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are below those of children of a similar age but are weaker in elements of language and creative development. Children are well taught and, by the time they enter Year 1, their skills and abilities are broadly

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average overall, but weaker in some areas of language, particularly writing skills. There is a clear emphasis on developing language to encourage both speaking and listening, especially for children who speak English as an additional language. Childrens' creativity is encouraged well through interesting themes that capture their imagination. For example, during the inspection, as part of the pirate theme, an inflatable boat became a Captain Pete's pirate ship. Children were excited about the secret treasure chest and enthusiastically wrote a list of things they thought it might contain. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed and staff work as a close, efficient and dedicated team.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Approximately one in four parents and carers replied to the questionnaire and most were happy with the school. They were especially pleased that their children were safe and enjoyed school. Only a few parents and carers expressed concerns. These were about how well informed they were about the progress their child was making and whether their child was making enough progress. A few were concerned about how well they, as parents and carers, were helped to support their child's learning. Some were concerned how well the school was led and managed.

Inspectors found that progress for all groups of pupils is good and improving. Good links are established with parents in Reception and continue through the school. In addition to an annual report parents have termly meetings with staff where progress information is shared. One parent wrote, 'I think Foxdell Infants caters for the diverse community and is always willing to work with parents, listening to suggestions and with courses which help me to help my child - like the numeracy course.' Leadership and management at all levels were found to be good. Inspectors' findings strongly support the positive views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxdell Infant 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 270 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	56	27	41	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	65	22	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	52	25	38	5	8	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	47	28	42	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	36	55	28	42	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	50	27	41	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	48	29	44	3	5	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)	30	45	30	45	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	39	33	50	1	2	3	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	36	37	56	0	0	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	35	37	56	2	3	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	31	47	30	45	1	2	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	48	28	42	4	6	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.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxdell Infant School, Luton, LU1 1TG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so helpful and polite. We were very impressed with the lovely displays of your writing and art work around the school. We thought your dragons were especially good. You told us how much you like your school and that you enjoyed your lessons because they were fun. You also told us how safe you feel in school. We agree with you that you go to a good school where there are a lot of exciting activities and where people look after you well.

Your teachers encourage you to work hard and make good progress in lessons. You make good contributions to your school and to the local community. Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body, all work hard to make sure your school is a happy and successful place in which to learn. You behave well and show a lot of interest in your lessons. We have asked them to do two things to make your school even better.

To help you make better progress, particularly those of you who find learning easy, we have asked your teachers to make sure they always give you work that is not too easy or too difficult but really makes you think a lot. We have also asked that when they mark your work they make it clear to you what you have to do next to make your work even better.

To make sure that you do not lose important learning time we have asked that the school works closely with your parents to make sure that you all come to school regularly.

You all can help by doing your best and always working hard. It was a great pleasure to visit your school and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

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