

Foxwood Foundation School and Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122906
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	340238
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Trevor Watts

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Taylor
Headteacher	Mr Chris Humphreys
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2007
School address	Derby Road Bramcote Nottingham
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons, involving 14 teachers or other class leaders. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, records of progress, displays of work, special events and visits, and documentation about safeguarding procedures and curriculum developments. Thirty three questionnaire returns were received from parents and carers.

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

- The curriculum for the students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- The two areas for which the school has specialist status - technology and applied learning.

Information about the school

Foxwood is a small, all-age, special school in the suburbs of Nottingham. It shares a large campus with two comprehensive schools, one primary school and a leisure centre. Pupils have a wide range of special educational needs or disabilities, including moderate and severe learning difficulties, autism and behavioural difficulties. The severity and complexity of pupils' needs has increased since the previous inspection. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. About 80% are White British, mostly boys. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is greater than the national average, and very few are in the care of their local authority. Since the previous inspection the school has attained specialist status in applied learning, to add to its previous status as a Technology College.

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

This is a good school. It has outstanding features such as the curriculum, sixth form and the provision of care, guidance and support. Senior staff have been very successful in broadening the scope of the applied learning through many vocational-related initiatives. The curriculum has been modified greatly, most notably in merging the approach for Key Stage 4 and sixth form students into a single 14-19 curriculum. This integrated approach is beginning to thrive under the skilled leadership of senior staff, who have a clear vision of what they wish to achieve. They have distinct and ambitious priorities for developing the curriculum, the sixth form and the increasingly broad, regular and valuable links with other partner institutions.

Students learn well in most lessons. Around half the lessons observed in the sixth form were outstanding, with students being given responsibilities, opportunities to develop their initiative and activities to match their needs and interests. Pupils and students are attentive and keen to do well. Those who are less able to take an active and cooperative role in lessons are helped well to gain from a good range of experiences and to develop their understanding and skills through activities that are selected and planned specifically for them. Many activities involve the community locally, particularly in other schools and agencies. Sometimes, lessons run at a pace that is comfortable, rather than challenging.

The school has outstanding systems to care for and support pupils. Pupils' attendance is average, and is encouraged by the enticing activities on offer, but too many have time off for reasons other than those concerned with their special needs.

The capacity to succeed is enhanced by the recent strong developments in the curriculum, including the two specialisms, the sixth form and the links with other educational institutions. Students leave with higher achievements than before and all go on to purposeful future lives, training and employment. Governors are strong in their overall support and their financial and organisational expertise. The leadership team has a clear and ambitious view of what it wants to achieve. There have been numerous changes of personnel and roles in the newly expanded team, and there has not been sufficient time for everyone to bed down into a fully coordinated team. Weaknesses in teaching have not been fully realised by school leaders, and too little has been done to improve attendance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the pace and challenge in some lessons so that it is more consistently good throughout the school.

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- Make stronger efforts to improve pupils' attendance.

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

Pupils' achievements are good because they are well motivated by the curriculum activities and by the teaching. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons, listen to what they are told, cooperate well with staff and enjoy warm relationships that help their learning to be good or outstanding in most lessons. They respond to staff and activities well and often apply themselves enthusiastically when the teaching is practical and interesting. The more able pupils take particular pleasure in their work-related learning and when developing skills that will help them to be more independent in future. Autistic pupils become more aware of their surroundings, how to communicate and understand what they are being asked to do. Less able pupils become more aware of their senses, what is being said to them and how to behave. The minority of girls have full access to all activities, and achieve equally as well as boys.

Pupils have an outstandingly positive attitude to being healthy and looking after themselves physically through exercise, sports and what they eat and drink. They say they feel extremely safe in school, and their parents confirm this. Pupils' outstanding contribution to their community is seen, for instance, in their untiring helpfulness to each other and staff, their mixing with pupils from many other schools and their support for various charities. Pupils learn good skills in English, mathematics and particularly in the school's primary specialism of information and communication technology and aspects of design and technology. This is strongly supplemented by their excellent development of work-related skills for particular forms of employment, as well as gaining other relevant skills such as being polite, punctual and willing.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, illustrated by the school's International Schools status for its links abroad; an impromptu pause for reflection in the school's memorial garden was extremely well observed; assemblies are regularly and effectively aimed at developing social and emotional skills and attitudes.

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.

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

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and classroom support staff are capable and experienced. They know their pupils well, both in their capabilities and as individuals. They enjoy positive relationships with their pupils and mostly plan a good range of activities to challenge pupils' learning. The planning is securely based on teachers' accurate and continuing assessment of pupils' progress. Sometimes the pace of a lesson settles down too much and becomes less challenging. Nevertheless, staff are mostly very encouraging, helping pupils by giving choices and using appropriate resources and equipment, including computers and wall-mounted electronic screens to enrich the learning.

The curriculum's strength lies in its versatility and activities extremely well matched to all groups of pupils, whether they are very young and have severe and complex needs, or are older and are going out of school semi-independently for college links or work experiences. Staff have very good subject knowledge, and virtually every course leads to some form of nationally recognised certification such as in floristry, catering, independent learning and all the core skills. Pupils achieve, on average, at least six such qualifications, almost double the level of three years ago. There are positive and close ties with a nearby college. A variety of courses is shared each week in both partner establishments and in a range of other institutions across the city and county. Three local secondary schools send pupils to benefit from Foxwood's expertise each week.

Safeguarding procedures are exemplary; all regulations are fully met. They are thoroughly understood by all staff, with pupils having great confidence that staff know them well and can provide help and advice when needed. Support is very well targeted at different groups of pupils with their widely differing needs, including visits by

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innumerable outside professionals and agencies, and visits to many places where assistance is offered. The few pupils who are looked after by their local authority are exceptionally well supported.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governors have assembled a leadership team which is increasingly developing its expertise and togetherness in identifying and promoting the school's priorities. The promotion of community cohesion has been at the heart of school developments in recent years. Leaders have demonstrated their skill and dedication through the growing strengths of the school in the vocational curriculum, the partnership links, applied learning and associated vocational skills, and the personal support that is provided throughout the school. There are also wider community involvements nationally, such as leading conferences and hosting workshops and courses, as well as visiting schools in France and Sweden and being in close contact with one in The Gambia.

Governors have a strongly supportive role in these developments and have worked closely with senior staff in deciding on their priorities and appropriate strategies to achieve them. School leaders ensure that all pupils have full access to the curriculum, whether designing individual courses for pupils regardless of the complexity and severity of their needs, or choosing a range of residential visits that all pupils can take part in. Leaders ensure that everyone, including governors, has had an excellent breadth of training linked to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being, and also to the school's wider and developing needs.

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

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 effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There are currently no pupils in this unit, and there have not been any for several years. For this reason, it is not possible to make a judgement on outcomes. The school has a dormant curriculum for these children. It plans to adapt it according to the needs of any future children, whether in a separate class or integrated appropriately with older pupils who share similar needs and abilities. This unit is managed as part of the main school, where good teaching and support expertise are available.

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	IE 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

Sixth form

Students make outstanding progress. They are proud of their school, and of themselves. They are keen to do their best and get involved in many activities such as sports and leisure, communications and technology and practical everyday living skills. All have experiences of work and many go on to work-related training, and ultimately to paid employment. They take their responsibilities seriously when travelling to other venues for lessons and work opportunities and get on well with classmates from other establishments. The teaching is outstanding in the way staff relate positively to students and their needs, being warm and friendly as well as challenging, knowledgeable and encouraging. Support staff are well deployed, capable and justifiably confident. Curricular opportunities are manifold, as well as relevant to different groups of pupils, providing opportunities for all. The provision of care, support and guidance is individually tailored to each student. The unit is outstandingly well led and managed by two senior staff with excellent organisational and pastoral skills and with great ability and vision with regard to the curriculum and the community.

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

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Parents who responded to the questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. The lowest positive response was about how consistently behaviour difficulties are dealt with, but even here only two parents thought it was not good enough. The inspectors found that behaviour was good, and was well managed by staff when pupils with behavioural difficulties were unable to control their own behaviour. Generally, parents congratulate the staff on their approachability, hard work and dedication. They say that the school, 'makes excellent use of its resources and outside agencies.' Although many comment that relations between the school and parents are strong and valuable, a very few comment that they could be better informed about the curriculum or their children's progress. The inspection team looked at a representative sample of communications with parents. In all these examples, there were regular updates on both of these matters, as well as about events past and future involving groups of pupils or the school as a whole. The overall feel for the school by parents was summed up by one parent who wrote, 'Foxwood is an amazing school. My daughter has had a fabulous time there.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Foxwood Foundation School and Technology College 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 94 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	79	6	18	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	73	8	24	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	52	13	39	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	55	12	36	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	64	11	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	45	15	45	0	0	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	52	15	45	1	3	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)	19	58	12	36	0	0	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	52	14	42	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	55	10	30	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	45	15	45	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	22	67	8	24	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	67	11	33	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.



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxwood Foundation School and Technology College, Bramcote, NG9 3GF
Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently.

We found that you go to a good school. There are some excellent things about it, such as the way all the lessons are individually planned for you, whatever your interests are and how difficult you need the work to be. Your teachers and other adults in classes are good at organising and teaching lessons that are interesting and helpful for you. The older students among you go to a great range of activities, many of them about the work you might do when you leave, how to look after yourselves and how to live more independently. There are also lots of sports and technology activities for you. The school has organised many very worthwhile links with other schools and colleges. Most of you in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form go to these other places, to work places and other training units. You also welcome pupils from these other schools into some of your lessons.

You said that you feel very safe and happy in school, and feel extremely well looked after. You told us that you would be confident to talk with staff if you have any problems.

Some of you do not come to school as often as you should, and so we have asked the school to find new ways to encourage you to attend better. You can help in this. Sometimes in lessons you are not encouraged to work as quickly or as hard as you could, and so we have asked teachers not to let this happen.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Watts

Lead inspector

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