

Foxyards Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103788
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	355460
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kay Bickerdike
Headteacher	Sammy O'Gorman
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 15 teachers and visited 20 lessons, including some observations with a specific focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle managers, members of the governing body, and pupils. They looked at a range of information, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed questionnaires returned by 124 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent is the school able to demonstrate that pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and is the below average performance in 2010 of Key Stage 1 boys typical or specific to this cohort of pupils?
- How effective has the school been in improving the quality of teaching since its last inspection by ensuring that the teachers provide consistently challenging work for their pupils and that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work?
- How skilled are middle-level leaders in monitoring and evaluating their areas of responsibility, and what is their impact on pupils' achievement?

Information about the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. Most of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Most of these pupils have general learning difficulties, including speech, language and communication, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. In recent years, there has been a very high turnover of staff. At the time of the inspection, four of the class teachers were newly qualified and three-quarters of the middle leadership team, known as phase leaders, were new to their posts. The school has a range of awards and accreditations; the most recent of these is an International School Award in recognition of its work with a global dimension.

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

Foxyards Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a number of strengths, which include a strong emphasis placed on ensuring that pupils are safe and well cared for and the good development of pupils' social skills. These aspects of the school's provision are greatly appreciated by parents and pupils.

As a result of changes in the school's intake in recent years, children's skills and abilities on entry to the Nursery have declined and are now well below what is normally seen at this age. Currently, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average and, from their higher starting point on entry to the school, this represents satisfactory progress.

On entry, children's social skills are generally poor. The school invests a great deal of time and resources in successfully helping pupils to develop socially, thus providing a climate within which learning can take place. Behaviour is good, and most pupils relate well to one another. Consequently, lessons run smoothly and without undue disturbance. Senior managers lead by example and provide good role models for teaching. There is some good teaching, and inspectors observed good features of teaching in all classes. However, the learning that results from teaching is, too often, only satisfactory. This is because teachers do not use assessment techniques well enough in order to ensure that pupils have clear, specific and measurable targets to achieve and time to review what they have learned. In addition, the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work varies from class to class and lacks impact as a tool for improving pupils' work. The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils. Its strengths lie in the practical activities provided which help enrich pupils' experiences and promote their enjoyment in learning. For example, the school's partnerships with local secondary schools enable pupils to benefit from specialist tuition in subjects such as science.

The school has put a lot of effort into promoting cohesion within its own community and in involving families whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable or hard-to-reach. It is also successful in broadening pupils' horizons by developing their understanding of the day-to-day lives of children in some other countries, as recognised through the International School Award. However, pupils do not have sufficient awareness of the range of cultural traditions within British society.

The well-established systems for checking on the progress made by pupils provide a wealth of data. However, these data are not always presented in formats that are easy for staff to interpret or provide a sharp enough focus on the performance of individual pupils or groups of pupils. As a result, managers are not as clearly informed as they might be. Nonetheless, the governing body fulfils its role well by providing good support and effective challenge. The middle-level leaders are inexperienced and are yet to develop the full range of skills required for their roles. The school's procedures for evaluating its

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effectiveness are sound and provide the basis for a clear plan of action. These features and the actions taken to secure improvement mean that the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is more consistently good by ensuring that all teachers:
 - set clear, specific and measurable targets for their pupils to achieve in lessons and allow enough time for pupils to review their learning
 - follow the guidance set out in the school's marking policy and make sure that pupils act on the comments made in their books.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that data about pupils' attainment are presented in formats that enable very clear monitoring of the progress of individuals and groups of pupils
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they clearly focus their monitoring on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the richness and diversity within British society.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Almost all of the parents or carers who returned the inspection questionnaires felt that their children enjoy school. This is because the school clearly understands the social and emotional needs of the families it serves and meets these well. It has, for example, identified that it needs to compensate for gaps in the life experiences of pupils by providing a wide range of first-hand learning opportunities. These heighten pupils' enjoyment of education and help motivate them. The good progress made by pupils in developing skills in working collaboratively and independently, and their willingness to learn, help ensure that they play a full part in lessons. Despite satisfactory progress in improving the situation, the development of boys' skills as writers remains an on-going priority for the school.

It was clear from the lessons observed during the inspection that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn satisfactorily. Some of these pupils have difficulty in concentrating while others have limited cognitive skills, yet in all instances observed these barriers to learning were successfully countered through good quality individual support. Skilled teaching assistants play a key role and ensure the inclusion of these pupils in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 English lesson, the close support and good dialogue sustained by a teaching assistant enabled a pupil with speech and language difficulties to successfully construct the outline plan for a piece of writing.

The politeness and consideration shown by pupils reflect the well-established and consistently applied procedures for promoting good behaviour. Instances of unacceptable

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behaviour are generally caused by a few pupils with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils make a positive contribution to the wider community through, for example, a range of fundraising for various charities. A clear moral code permeates the daily life of the school and pupils clearly know right from wrong. Pupils' spiritual awareness, as seen in their understanding of their own development and appreciation of that of others, is satisfactory. While pupils have a strong sense of their own heritage, enhanced through regular visits to the Black Country Museum, their knowledge of other cultural traditions is too limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors found many good features of teaching in all the lessons observed. For example, teachers are skilled in managing their pupils and generally provide clear explanations about new concepts because their knowledge of the subjects they teach is secure. In most lessons, teachers use the interactive whiteboards effectively to help clarify learning and the tasks set for pupils provide appropriate levels of challenge. In all lessons, teaching assistants work well in partnership with the teachers. While all teachers display many good technical skills, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not always as good as it should be. This is because lessons lose pace when teachers either talk for too long or lose focus on the intended learning. Sometimes the activities planned do not sustain a rapid enough pace of learning for all groups. The quality of guidance provided for pupils through

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teachers' marking of their work is not always effective in securing learning. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed that agreed systems for marking are inconsistently applied and the comments made by teachers do not often result in improvements being made where they are needed.

The impact of the curriculum on pupils' academic attainment is satisfactory. Its main strength lies in the promotion of pupils' personal development through regular opportunities to explore social and moral issues. In addition, pupils' enjoyment of learning is enhanced through the strong emphasis placed on first-hand experiences and practical activities. This approach has been particularly effective in motivating boys, and has resulted in their improved attitudes towards learning and improved writing. For example, the interest and imagination of a boy with identified behavioural difficulties was completely captured in an English lesson when he was challenged to explain the presence of a large egg that had appeared on the grass bank outside the classroom and which, in his view, was beginning to change colour.

The school is a caring community in which pupils' welfare is given a high priority. The individual needs of every pupil are very well understood, and good quality support is given to the potentially vulnerable. There are clear, well-established arrangements to induct pupils into school and to ensure a smooth transition as they move on to the secondary phase of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Parents' overwhelmingly positive views reflect their appreciation that this is an inclusive school in which discrimination has no place and that gives their children a sense of belonging. The direction provided in embedding ambition and driving improvement stems largely from the headteacher and her senior staff and is based on good systems for checking on the progress made by pupils. The high turnover of staff has resulted in the recent loss of almost all phase leaders. This means that the need to improve their skills as leaders and managers, which was highlighted at the time of the last inspection, remains an urgent area for development. In part, this is because the lack of succession planning means that the new managers have had no previous opportunity to be prepared for their new roles. The governing body has provided clear direction and good support for the headteacher and her senior managers during a period of significant staff turnover. The governing body is effective because of the range of professional skills that it brings to the school. These enable it to be active, for example, in helping ensure the good safeguarding of pupils and in monitoring the effectiveness of the school.

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Safeguarding procedures have a high profile, fully meet requirements, and are rigorously applied as a result of well-developed systems for quality assurance and risk assessment. The wide range of effective partnerships with local schools adds value to pupils' experiences. Strong links with schools within the North Dudley Learning Partnership bring great benefits in terms of the professional development of staff and subject-specific expertise. For example, an advanced skills teacher from a local secondary school visited during the course of the inspection to work on a geography project with pupils in Year 5. The school works hard to ensure that there are good opportunities for informal contact with parents who do not respond to formal communications. The 'Stay and Play' sessions available for parents of the youngest children are useful in developing links with parents, and the school is developing the use of internet to enable pupils to access work online.

Work is in progress to improve the promotion of community cohesion. There are emerging links with schools in France, Australia and Sweden and the pupils are part of a local schools' initiative to support a Nursery School in the Gambia. However, the school recognises that not enough is done to broaden pupils' horizons in relation to the richness and diversity within British society.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Over the past three years, children's skills and abilities on entry to the Nursery have been consistently well below those typical for their age in all areas of learning. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in their social and emotional development. They also make good progress in communication, language and literacy as a result of the very strong focus placed on developing these skills. Despite this good progress, the performance of boys in developing early skills as writers remains an issue for further improvement. In all other areas of learning, progress is satisfactory. By the time

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children move from Reception to Year 1, children's attainment is below average overall. They have good access to a satisfactory range of interesting and enjoyable activities that encourage independence and initiative and cover all areas of learning. Adults display a good understanding of the learning needs of young children and are generally good at developing learning through constant dialogue about the activities being tackled. Adults place a strong emphasis on ensuring the welfare and safety of the children and keep a careful check on children's progress so that provision can be suitably adjusted in response to what is learned. However, the assessments on which some of the monitoring is based are sometimes too descriptive. They lack detailed evaluation of precisely how well the children have achieved their tasks and make few suggestions about the next steps in learning for each individual.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers recorded positive views in all of the areas surveyed. The aspect of the school's performance of greatest concern, identified in 10% of the questionnaires, relates to the management of unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that the behaviour of pupils is well managed and that there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Where these do occur, they generally involve the small number of pupils with clearly identified emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 339 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	52	57	46	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	56	51	41	3	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	37	71	57	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	35	70	56	7	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	44	35	70	56	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	31	73	59	8	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	35	76	61	3	2	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)	35	28	71	57	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	36	68	55	7	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	23	76	61	10	8	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	28	75	60	4	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	40	61	49	5	4	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	48	57	46	3	2	1	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



19 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Foxyards Primary School, Tipton, DY4 8BH

I would like to thank all of you for being so welcoming and helpful to your inspectors when we visited your school. I think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that there are a lot of things that the school is doing right and some things that need to be improved. I know that all the adults who help to run your school want it to be a good school. For this to happen, you need to make better progress in your work.

Here are some of the things that are best about your school.

I was impressed by your good manners and behaviour.

You feel safe because the staff take good care of you.

You do a lot to help with the day-to-day running of your school and are good at helping others who are not as fortunate as you are. I think that the help that you have given to the Nursery school in the Gambia is very good.

The governors who help run your school are doing a good job.

To help you to make better progress in your work, I want your school to do three things.

Your teachers need to make sure that you have clear targets to achieve in your lessons and time at the end of lessons to think about what you have done well and what you could improve on. I would also like you to act on the comments that your teachers make when they mark your work.

Most of your teachers in charge of year groups have only been in charge for a short time, so I want them to find out more about the best ways of doing this job. To help them do this they need to have them clear information about the progress that you are making.

You already know something about how children live in other parts of the world. Now it would be really useful for you to learn about children in other parts of this country whose families have come from other parts of the world.

I would like you to play your part in helping the school to become even better. The best way for you to do this is to pay careful attention to what your teachers ask you to do and to make sure that you always do your corrections!

I wish you great success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector

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