

Forest Town Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130255
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	360120
Inspection dates	25–26 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Hall

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	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Godson
Headteacher	Garry Ineson
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 13 teachers in a total of 24 lessons or parts of lessons. The headteacher and a senior teacher joined inspectors for seven lesson observations. Meetings were held with the school's leaders, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies, planning, records, minutes of governing body meetings and data about pupils' performance. They also examined documentation associated with the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe. Inspectors scrutinised 43 completed questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 112 by pupils and 18 by staff.

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

- How well do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve, especially in English?
- Does pupils' behaviour have a positive impact on their learning and has pupils' attendance improved?
- How effectively do staff use the full range of assessment information to ensure that lesson activities are interesting and challenge all groups of pupils?
- How effective and rigorous are senior managers and subject leaders in monitoring the work of the school, judging the quality of provision and identifying further areas for improvement?

Information about the school

The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A very small number of pupils come from families where English is spoken as an additional language; their main language is Polish. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Their additional needs include speech and language difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. The school has a breakfast club that meets each morning.

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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of care and education for its pupils. The guidance and support the pupils receive to help them to improve their behaviour is good and has proved particularly successful. Many pupils say they like school but attendance, although improving, remains too low.

The school has improved in key areas as a result of its involvement in the intensifying support programme. Pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly average. Standards in mathematics have improved markedly. Across the school the teaching of mathematics is often good because staff have clear expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Following a period of some improvement, attainment in English has dipped because teachers do not always use the range of assessment information available to them to plan activities that demand enough of the pupils. Consequently, the pupils rarely produce lengthy and imaginative pieces of writing that show a high level of skill or neat presentation.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, but a small number of pupils do not have their additional needs identified early enough and, consequently, do not get as much benefit as they should from the targeted support which others receive.

The curriculum is satisfactory and appropriately planned. However, the school does not have sufficient information and communication technology resources to support and enliven learning in a range of subjects. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, while overall provision is satisfactory, pupils do not have enough well-structured opportunities to learn letters and sounds and develop early writing skills. In addition, the outdoor learning environment does not provide enough exciting or stimulating opportunities for the youngest children.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The middle-management team, which includes the leaders of mathematics and English, has an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning are not always sharp enough to evaluate the impact of improvement activities and to identify what the school needs to do next. The newly appointed Chair of the Governing Body is helping other governors to develop their roles in holding the school to account. While they have made a good start they have yet to address the school's ineffective approach to promoting community cohesion which results in the pupils' limited knowledge of other cultures. Nevertheless, the improvement since the last inspection, most notably in pupils' behaviour and their attainment in mathematics, indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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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?

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in English, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, by:
 - improving the attendance of pupils to at least the national average by July 2011
 - ensuring younger pupils are taught letters and sounds in a systematic way in order to develop their early reading and writing skills more speedily
 - ensuring all pupils have regular, exciting and well-planned opportunities to discuss their ideas and write at length and in depth
 - improving the pupils' presentation of work
 - identifying at an early stage the additional needs pupils may have and addressing these through appropriate programmes of support.
- Improve the quality of curriculum planning, teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers' assessments are used to plan activities that provide a good match of challenge to pupils' different abilities
 - increasing the number of computers and extending their use as a tool to support and extend learning across a range of subjects
 - improving the outdoor learning environment for youngest children to give more opportunities to promote learning and creativity.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the checks of the work of the school are rigorous enough to evaluate the quality of provision and identify the next steps for improvement
 - strengthening community cohesion and providing pupils with more opportunities to learn from other cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter school with skills that are a little below those expectations for their age. Most pupils make sound progress as they move through the school and their achievement is satisfactory.

Older pupils make good progress in mathematics. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, the teacher's enthusiastic approach spurred the pupils on to solve two-part problems involving decimals. Even better progress was seen in another class in Year 5 where pupils constructed and interpreted tables of information about rivers. Here probing questions ensured pupils' use of related mathematical vocabulary and touches of humour raised the level of interest in the task. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, although in the Early Years Foundation Stage there is little recognition of their specific needs. Similarly, the school has been slow to identify some pupils who fall behind with their learning. Therefore, some pupils with additional needs do not always get the help they require at an early enough stage.

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The school has worked with success to improve pupils' behaviour, and there has been a considerable reduction in the number of exclusions. Most pupils are well behaved in lessons. Most pupils say they feel safe, although some have concerns about the behaviour of a small minority of boys. However, those pupils do sometimes present challenging behaviour are supported well through the work of the nurture group. Provision to enable pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. Pupils understand the benefits of eating a healthy diet but this is not always reflected in their choices for packed lunches. 'Wake and Shake' activities and enthusiastic physical education lessons are provided to encourage a more active lifestyle. The pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory, notably through the work of the school council and playground leaders.

Although attendance is improving, there are still too many pupils who do not attend everyday and take holidays when the school is open.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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?

As one parent astutely notes, 'The standards of teaching varies'. While there is some good teaching and very occasionally some that is outstanding, there are weaknesses in the use of assessment information to provide consistently challenging activities for all groups of pupils. Consequently, teaching is satisfactory overall. During the school's involvement in the intensifying support programme it rightly focused on improving teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress in English and mathematics. This was particularly successful in

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mathematics. However, improvements have not been built upon, as successfully, in English because activities to promote writing do not always motivate the pupils. In addition, there are not enough information technology resources to encourage and support writing in exciting contexts.

Staff have good relationships with pupils and praise their efforts and provide a lot of encouragement. Pastoral care is effective in supporting the needs of most pupils at significant points in their time in school. It has been particularly successful in improving behaviour. The school now recognises that its approach of 'giving pupils time to settle' when they first start school has not ensured that their needs are recognised and supported speedily enough. The breakfast club makes a satisfactory contribution to supporting the pupils and their families and helps many make a positive start to the school day.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and particularly the middle managers use their skills well to improve teaching. They lead by example and promote the stronger elements of teaching and learning, seen in the school, through their work with their colleagues. The mathematics subject leader has been successful in improving the level of challenge for pupils and through continuing professional development is helping to ensure that attainment continues to rise. The leadership of English is also well focused on improvement but some initiatives have not built as successfully on earlier developments in order to raise attainment further. The assessment coordinator collates information about the progress pupils make, but this is not always interrogated and used well enough to accelerate progress. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body understands the challenges the school faces and is keen to extend further their programme of focused visits.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and carers and has organised opportunities to encourage them to visit the school, but with limited success to date. Provision to promote equality of opportunity is satisfactory including in tackling discrimination. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and the school carefully checks the suitability of everyone who works with the pupils. Procedures for child protection and first aid all meet requirements. The school has made budgetary decisions to prioritise the employment of a relatively high number of teachers and mid-day staff to support both learning and pupils' behaviour. This, however, has led to limited funds to improve the outdoor environment and resources to support curriculum development. The school is not effective in promoting community cohesion and there has been no audit of provision in this area. While there are

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some links with local groups these are not extensive and there has not been sufficient work to unite groups in the local community or to extend wider and global links to develop pupils' cultural awareness.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	4
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are a little below the expectations for their age. This is mostly in speaking and listening, their knowledge of letters and sounds and early writing. Their personal and social development is a little better, although some are very quiet and struggle to take part in discussions. Their physical skills are close to the expectations for their age. With several of the children now attending local Sure Start provision or other pre-school settings, some skills are improving and most children settle readily to school. Staff are starting to examine whether initial assessments of what the children can do are a little cautious. Staff praise the children which builds their self-confidence and there are good relationships between the adults and their charges. Most children make satisfactory progress. The indoor area for the children meets most of their needs. The current focus on 'Knights and Castles' interests many of the children, including the boys, who enjoy role-play sessions which make a satisfactory contribution to developing their speaking skills. Opportunities are planned to provide a balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities, but at times there is not enough structure or support to some mark-making activities to enable the children to improve their early writing skills. The outdoor learning environment is not stimulating and there are few resources to encourage children to copy letters or words.

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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 smaller proportion of parents and carers than usual responded to the inspection questionnaire. Almost all of those who replied agreed that the school keeps pupils safe and encourages them to develop healthy lifestyles. A few parents and carers think they are not kept well informed about the progress their children make or that the school takes sufficient account of their concerns. A few parents added written comments. Common themes among these comments related to not being informed of possible difficulties their child was encountering and worries about behaviour. Inspectors found that information for parents about their child's progress was satisfactory overall, but that information about the curriculum was rather limited. Inspectors found that the school has been successful in bringing improvements to behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Forest Town 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 301 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	49	18	42	4	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	65	14	33	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	47	18	42	4	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	60	12	28	3	7	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	25	58	14	33	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	49	20	47	0	0	2	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	49	20	47	1	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)	24	56	13	30	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	49	18	42	2	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	53	16	37	4	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	51	15	35	4	9	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	21	49	19	44	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	60	14	33	3	7	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 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.



27 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Forest Town Primary School, Mansfield, NG19 0ED

Thank you very much for making the inspectors welcome when we visited your school recently. My colleagues and I enjoyed meeting you, especially the groups we talked to who helped explain what you all do. We also liked meeting you in lessons and break-times and when we attended assemblies. I enjoyed chatting to several of you at lunchtime and was pleased that most of you said you enjoy mathematics, art and physical education but was disappointed that not as many of you like writing.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. The staff look after you and ensure you are kept safe. You are making more progress in your learning, especially in mathematics. However, there are a few things that still need to be improved.

We have asked the headteacher, governing body and staff to:

- help you all make faster progress, particularly in your writing
- improve the planning of lessons so that they always have the right amount of challenge for you
- improve the way staff check how well things are working in school and what needs to be improved
- help to improve your attendance.

You can all help by encouraging everyone to come to school everyday, unless they are ill, and always working as hard and as neatly as you can.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector

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